Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Helsinki

THE GO-BETWEENS – THE ROLE OF 'TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE' IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Cover photo: The author, crossing a suspension bridge in far west Nepal, while visiting a project community. Photo taken on the author's camera by a project team member.

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ABSTRACT

Billions of Euros are spent each year on the highly contested subject of development cooperation. Is it the right thing to do, and is it doing any good? It is assumed that carefully crafted policies from donors will be implemented worldwide, regardless of the cultural setting. There is an assumed flow from rational aid policies, to financing aid practice, to aid consequences and impacts, yet none of these steps are certain and uncontested. Little attention is given to the go-betweens, the people and organisations responsible for the practice of development policy.

The key question asked within this dissertation is what are the roles, motivations and contribution of individuals and organisations in development cooperation? The overall research questions are grouped into three parts: a) What are the roles and motivations of individuals and the consulting companies working in development cooperation?; b) What contribution can (or should?) these individuals and companies make to translating norms, regulatory frameworks and values into practice in complex operating environments?; and c) What is the role of technical assistance in achieving sustainable and equitable water governance in Nepal?

My contention is that the development complex (and development interventions specifically) depends on human agency and capabilities in the form of individuals and organisations – rather than only the transfer of money or technology. This includes the attitudes and motivations of the beneficiaries themselves, the local governments, donor government staff, NGOs and researchers, and the persons involved in the provision of technical assistance. All these groups have the chance to contribute to, or to impede development. These articles drill down particularly to the role of the latter group. These individuals providing technical assistance need to operate within the norms and regulations of the donor and recipient governments, and the local cultures and realities of the countries, local governments and communities they work with. The individuals both influence the group they work with, and in turn are influenced by the group habitus.

In this thesis I contend that people at all levels have an important role in the implementation of development cooperation. Staff working in donor and recipient governments, and community level actors are all critical for facilitating or blocking development activities; just as are the technical advisors themselves. All bring in their own motivations, values and incentives. However, I cannot rule out the role of modalities, institutions or cultures as well, as clearly in the case studies the local cultures and institutions (both project imposed and community-based) are constantly interacting with each other and with the individuals involved. In addition, evidence of a habitus among development workers suggests that there is also a significant role for

the development 'culture'. Hence, I operate between methodological individualism and collectivism, with a constructivist approach.

In particular, my study is focused on Finnish development cooperation, including Finns working in a variety of roles and modalities, and Nepalese co-workers in my two case study projects. The major approaches and themes regarding technical assistance and development cooperation that emerged in my research included: motivations; habitus; brokerage, translation and bricolage; gender equality and human rights; and principal-agent theory. The research approaches different concepts of technical assistance from many directions. It covers the different individual motivations for working in development, from students of development studies, through people working in many types of role – what I have referred to as the spectrum of technical cooperation. It also analyses the role of consulting companies working in development – a topic rarely studied. Using two Finnish funded rural water management projects in Nepal as case studies, I considered the role of technical assistance in transferring the values and policies of donors and recipient governments into practice. I examine the way that the international and Nepali experts translate the policies into practice, and feed practices and learning back up to the policy setters and donors. This is supported with discussion on operationalising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and human rights in Nepal. And finally, I consider the role of the TA in supporting development of the nascent local governments in Nepal, building their capacities to secure safe water for all. The methodology includes questionnaires, interviews, and two case studies.

Development cooperation does not function simply as a financial transfer mechanism. Yet the role of individuals to facilitate implementation is often ignored. Acknowledging the role of individuals in coordination with other stakeholders, in implementing policies and strategies, and adapting them to local realities, would be a critical step in development cooperation in general, and specifically, in water governance and human rights. This is important both for decision-makers and for researchers.

Keywords: Technical assistance; development cooperation; water governance; Nepal; gender equality and social inclusion; human rights-based approach; motivations; translation; brokering

TIIVISTELMÄ

Miljardeja euroja käytetään joka vuosi kiistanalaiseksi käsitettyyn kehitysyhteistyöhön. Onko investointi oikeutettu ja onko kehitysyhteistyöstä todellista hyötyä? Rahoittajien yksityiskohtaisia politiikkalinjauksia oletetaan sovellettavan kaikkialla maailmassa huolimatta erilaisista kulttuuriympäristöistä. Yhteistyön vaikutukset etenevät rationaalisista kehityspoliittisista linjauksista käytännön kehitysavun rahoitukseen ja edelleen avun seurauksiin ja vaikutuksiin, mutta yksikään näistä suhteista ei ole varma tai kiistanalaton. Huomiota ei ole kiinnitetty riittävästi kehitysyhteistyön välittäjiin, toimeen paneviin ihmisiin ja organisaatioihin.

Tämän väitöskirjan avainkysymys on, mitkä ovat kehitysyhteistyön toimeenpanevien henkilöiden ja organisaatioiden roolit, motiivit ja panostukset. Yleiset tutkimuskysymykset on jaettu kolmeen osaan: a) Mitä rooleja ja motiiveja on kehitysyhteistyössä toimivilla ihmisillä ja konsulttiyrityksillä?; b) Miten nämä henkilöt ja yritykset voivat tulkita normeja, sääänteleviä viitekehyksiä ja arvoja käytäntöön sopiviksi monimutkaisissa toimintaympäristöissä?; ja c) Mikä on teknisen avun rooli kestävän ja tasa-arvoisen vesivarojen hallinnan saavuttamisessa Nepalissa?

Oletukseni on, että kehitysyhteistyön kokonaisuus ja sen toimeenpanotavat riippuvat inhimillisestä toimijuudesta ja ihmisten ja organisaatioiden kapasiteetista – pikemminkin kuin vain rahan tai teknologian vaihdosta. Tähän vaikuttavat itse avunsaajien, paikallishallinnon, rahoittajatahojen henkilökunnan, kanslaisnjärjestöjen, tutkijoiden ja teknissessä avussa toimivien henkilöiden asenteet ja motiivit. Kaikilla näillä on mahdollisuus edesauttaa tai haitata kehitystä. Julkaisuni keskittyvät erityisesti viimeiseen ryhmään. Teknisten avun henkilöstön tulee työskennellä antaja- ja vastaanottajahallitusten normien ja säännösten mukaan ja heidän tulee sopeutua vastaanottajamaan ja sen paikallishallinnon ja yhteisöjen kulttuuriin ja todellisuuteen. Ihmiset vaikuttavat omaan työyhteisöönsä, ja toisaalta sen habitus vaikuttaa heihin.

Väitöstyössäni esitän, että kaikkien tasojen toimijoilla on tärkeä rooli kehitysyhteistyön toteuttamisessa. Avun antaja- ja vastaanottajamaiden sekä yhteisötason toimijat ovat yhtäläisesti tärkeitä kehitystoimien edesauttamisessa tai estämisessä, aivan kuten tekniset asiantuntijatkin. Kaikki tuovat työhön omat tarkoitusperänsä, arvonsa ja kannusteensa. En kuitenkaan voi jättää huomiotta käytäntöjen, instituutioiden ja kulttuureiden roolia, sillä ne (sekä hankkeiden luomina että yhteisöstä kumpuavina) vaikuttavat jatkuvasti toisiinsa ja niissä toimiviin ihmisiin. Lisäksi on ilmeistä, että kehitystoimijoiden habitus viittaa siihen, että on olemassa erityinen kehitysyhteistyökulttuuri. Toimin siten metodologisen individualismin ja kollektivismin välisessä rajatilassa käyttäen konstruktivistista ja kriittis-realistista lähestymistapaa.

Tutkimukseni keskittyvät erityisesti Suomen kehitysyhteistyöhön mukaan lukien erilaisissa rooleissa ja käytännön tehtävissä työskenteleviin suomalaisiin sekä kahden kehityshankkeen nepalilaisiin yhteistyökumppaneihin. Tutkimuksissani esiin tulevia tärkeimpiä teknistä

apua ja yhteistyötä käsitteleviä lähestymistapoja ja teemoja ovat: motivaatiot; habitus; kehityksen tarkoitusperien välittäminen (brokerage) ja tulkinta (translation), sekä sosiaalisten käytäntöjen itsestään muovautuminen (bricolage), sukupuolten välinen tasa-arvo, ihmisoikeudet, ja toimijuusteoria.

Työni lähestyy teknisen avun eri kokonaisuuksia monilta suunnilta. Käsittelen erilaisia henkilökohtaisia kehitysyhteistyön parissa työskentelyn motivaatioita, joita ovat esittäneet niin kehitysalan opiskelijat kuin monissa rooleissa työskennelleet toimijatkin. Tätä kutsun teknisen yhteistyön kirjoksi. Analysoin myös kehitysyhteistyön konsulttiyritysten roolia, mikä on harvoin ollut tutkimuksen kohteena. Käsittelen teknisen avun roolia kehitysavun antaja- ja vastaanottajahallitusten arvojen ja hallintomallien käytäntöönpanossa käyttämällä tapaustutkimuksina kahta Suomen rahoittamaa Nepalin maaseudun vesihanketta. Tutkin, kuinka kansainväliset ja nepalilaiset asiantuntijat soveltavat politiikkoja käytäntöön ja toisaalta syöttävät omaksutut käytännöt ja kentän opit takaisin politiikkojen tekijöille ja rahoittajille. Tätä tukee keskustelu kestävän kehityksen tavoitteista (Sustainable Development Goals, SDG) ja ihmisoikeuksista Nepalissa. Lopussa pohdin teknisen avun roolia kehityksen tukena, kun Nepalin kehittyvät paikallishallinnot luovat rakenteita vesihuollon takaamiseksi kaikille. Tutkimusmetodiikka sisältää mm. kyselyitä, haastatteluja ja kaksi tapaustutkimusta.

Kehitysyhteistyö ei toimi yksinomaan varojen siirtomekanismina. Yksilöiden rooli yhteistyön toteuttamisessa jää usein sivuseikaksi. Yksilöiden roolin parempi huomioiminen muiden toimijoiden ohella säännösten ja strategioiden toteuttajina ja niiden soveltajina paikallisiin oloihin olisi tärkeä askel yleisesti kehitysyhteistyölle ja erityisesti vesivarojen hallinnassa ja ihmisoikeustyössä. On tärkeää, että sekä päättäjät että tutkijat ymmärtävät tämän.

Avainsanat: Tekninen apu; kehitysyhteistyö; vesivarojen hallinta; Nepal; sukupuolten välinen ja sosiaalinen tasa-arvo ja oikeudenmukaisuus; ihmisoikeusperusteinen lähestymistapa; motivaatiot; tulkinta; välittäminen; bricolage

सारांश

अत्यधिक प्रतिष्पर्धात्मक रुपमा रहेको विकास सहयोगको लागि हरेक वर्ष अरबौ यूरो खर्च भइरहेको छ । के यो ठीक भइरहेको छ ? अनि के यसले राम्रो काम गरिरहेको छ ? स्थानीय सॉस्कृतिक संरचनाको पर्वाह नगरी दाताहरुले तर्जुमा गरेका नीतिहरु विश्वव्यापीरुपमा लागू गरिन्छ । तर्कसंगत सहयता नीतिको माध्यमबाट सहयोग अभ्यासमा लगानी, सहयोगको असर र प्रभावसम्मका कुराहरुमा एउटा धारणा बनाइएको छ र यि कुनै पनि धारणाहरु निश्चित र निर्विरोध छैनन् । विकास नीतिको अभ्यासको लागि जिम्मेवार मध्यस्थकर्ता, जनता र संस्थाहरुमा थोरै मात्रामा मात्र ध्यान दिइएको छ ।

यस सोध प्रबंधमा विकास सहयोगमा व्यक्ति तथा संस्थाको भूमिका, उत्प्रेरणा तथा योगदान के हुन्छ ? भन्ने प्रमुख प्रश्न सोधिएको थियो । समग्र अनुसन्धान प्रश्नहरुलाई तीन भागमा विभाजन गरिएको छ : क) विकास सहयोगमा काम गर्ने व्यक्ति वा परामर्शदाता कम्पनीको भूमिका र उत्प्रेरणा के हुन्छ ? ख) जटील सञ्चालन वातावरणका बीचमा तोकिएका मापदण्ड, नियमन गर्ने ढाँचाहरु, तथा मूल्य मान्यता लाई कार्यरुप दिने कार्यमा यस्ता व्यक्तिहरु र कम्पनीहरुको योगदान के हुनसक्छ (वा हुनुपर्दछ) ? ग) नेपालमा दिगो र समतामूलक जलप्रशासन हासिल गर्न प्राविधिक सहयताको के भूमिका रहन्छ ?

मेरो तर्क यो छ कि विकासको यस जटिलतामा (खासगरी विकास प्रयासहरुमा) रकम र प्रविधिको स्थानान्तरण भन्दा पनि मानव निकायको रुपमा रहेका व्यक्ति र संस्थाहरुको क्षमतामा भर पर्दछ । यसमा लाभान्वित वर्गको आफ्नै, स्थानीय सरकारहरुको, दातृ निकायका कर्मचारीहरुको, गैह्र सरकारी संस्था र अनुसन्धानकर्ताहरुका साथै प्राविधिक सहायता अन्तर्गतका व्यक्तिहरुको प्रवृत्ती र उत्प्रेरणा समेत पर्दछन् । यि सबै समूहहरुले विकासमा योगदान गर्ने वा बाधा उत्पन्न गराउने सम्भावना रहन्छ । यस शोधमा खासगरी पछिल्ला समूहहरुको भूमिकाको बारोमा गहिराईमा अध्ययन गरिएको छ । यस्ता प्राविधिक सहायता प्रदान गर्ने व्यक्तिहरुले दातृनिकाय र लाभान्वित देशका मापदण्ड तथा नियमहरु एवम् आफु काम गर्ने स्थानीय सरकार तथा समुदाय र स्थानीय परिवेश तथा संस्कृतीहरुका बिचमा काम गर्नुपर्दछ । यस्ता व्यक्तिहरुले आफुले काम गर्ने समूहलाई प्रभाव पार्ने तथा त्यस्ता समूहको बानीबाट प्रभावित हुने दुबै हुने गर्दछ ।

यस शोध प्रबंधमा, विकास सहयोगको कार्यान्वयनमा सबै तहका व्यक्तिहरुको महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहन्छ भन्ने मेरो तर्क रहेको छ । दातृ निकाय तथा लाभान्वित सरकारको तर्फवाट काम गर्ने कर्मचारीहरु र समुदायका कार्यकर्ताहरु सबैजना एउटा प्राविधिक सल्लाहकारको भूमिकामा या त विकास क्रियाकलापहरु कार्यान्वयनमा सहजीकरण गर्ने या त बिथोल्ने विषयमा महत्वपूर्ण भूमिकामा हुन्छन् । सबैले आ–आफ्नो उत्प्रेरणा, मूल्य र प्रोत्साहनका कुराहरु अगाडी ल्याउने गर्दछन् । यद्यपी, म काम गर्ने ढांचा, संस्थाहरु र संस्कृतिको (दुबै परियोजना र समुदायमा आधारित) को भूमिकालाई समेत इन्कार गर्न सक्दिन, जसमा सम्बन्धित व्यक्तिहरु एकअर्कासंग निरन्तर रुपमा सम्पर्क र अन्तरक्रिया गरिरहेका हुन्छन् । यसका अतिरिक्त, विकासकर्मीहरु बिच रहेको व्यवसायिकताको प्रमाणले यो संकेत गर्दछ कि विकासको लागि संस्कृतिको समेत महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहन्छ । तसर्थ, म रचनात्मक व्यक्तिवाद र सामुहिकताको बिचमा रहेर रचनात्मक दृष्टिकोणको आधारमा परिचालित हुन्छु ।

विषेश गरि मेरो अध्ययन फिनल्याण्डको विकास सहयोगमा केन्द्रीत छ, जसमा मेरो अध्ययनमा समावेस दुइवटा परियोजनामा विभिन्न भूमिका र जिम्मेवारीमा काम गर्दै आएका फिनल्याण्डबासीहरु र नेपाली सहकर्मीहरु समावेस छन् । मेरो अनुसन्धानमा समावेस प्राविधिक सहायता र विकास सहयोग सम्बन्धी मुख्य दृष्टिकोण र विषयवस्तुहरुमा उत्प्रेरणा, बानी, मध्यस्थता, रुपान्तरण, स्थानीयता, लैंगिक समानता र मानव अधिकार एवम् प्रिन्सीपल–एजेण्ट सिद्धान्त पर्दछन् । यो अनुसन्धान धेरै दिशाहरुबाट प्राविधिक सहयताका विभिन्न अवधारणाहरुसम्म पुगेको छ । यसले विकास अध्ययनका विद्यार्थीहरुबाट, विभिन्न भूमिकामा काम गरिरहेका व्यक्तिहरु मार्फत

विकासमा काम गर्ने विभिन्न व्यक्तिगत प्रेरणालाई समेट्छ, जसलाई मैले प्राविधिक सहायताको विविधता (spectrum) को रुपमा उल्लेख गरेको छु । यसले हालसम्म विरलै अध्ययन गरिएको विकासमा काम गर्ने परामर्शदाता कम्पनीहरुको समेत विष्लेशण गर्दछ । मैले फिनल्याण्डको सहयोग रहेका नेपालका दुइवटा ग्रामीण जलस्रोत व्यवस्थापन परियोजनालाई अध्ययनको लागि उपयोग गरेको छु, जसमा दातृसंस्था र प्रापक सरकारको मूल्य मान्यता र नीतिहरुलाई अभ्यासमा परिणत गर्न प्राविधिक सहायताको भूमिकाको बारेमा ध्यान दिइएको छ । मैले अन्तरराष्ट्रिय र नेपाली विज्ञहरुले नीतिहरुलाई व्यवहारमा रुपान्तरण गर्ने तरिका र नीति निर्माताहरु र दातृ संस्थाहरुले अभ्यासहरुबाट सिक्ने विषयहरुलाई अध्ययन गरेको छु । यसले नेपालमा दिगो विकास लक्ष्य (SDGs) को सञ्चालन र मानव अधिकार सम्बन्धी बहसहरुबाट समर्थित छ । र अन्त्यमा, म नेपालको नवस्थापित स्थानीय सरकारले गर्ने विकासमा टेवा पुर्‍याउने तथा सबैको लागि सुरक्षित पानी सुनिश्चित गर्ने कार्यमा प्राविधिक सहायताको भूमिकाको बारेमा ध्यान दिन्छु । यस पद्धतिमा प्रश्नावलीहरु, अन्तरवार्ताहरु र दुइवटा अवस्था अध्ययनहरु समावेश छन् ।

विकास सहयोग केवल एक वित्तिय हस्तान्तरण संयन्त्रको रुपमा सहजै कार्य गर्दैन । अझै पनि कार्यान्वयन गर्ने कार्यमा सहजीकरण गर्ने व्यक्तिहरुको भूमिकालाई प्रायः बेवास्ता गर्ने गरिन्छ । सामान्यतया सबै विकास सहयोगमा र खास गरी जलप्रशासन र मानव अधिकारमा, अन्य सरोकारवालाहरुसंग समन्वय गर्ने, नीति र रणनीतिहरु कार्यान्वयन गर्ने र यसलाई स्थानीय यथार्थता अनुरुप ढाल्ने कार्यमा व्यक्तिहरुको भूमिकालाई स्वीकार गर्नु एउटा महत्वपूर्ण कदम हुनेछ । यो निर्णयकर्ताहरु र अनुसन्धानकर्ताहरु दुबैको लागि महत्वपूर्ण छ ।

प्रमुख शब्दहरुः प्राविधिक सहायता, विकास सहयोग, पानी शासन, नेपाल, लैंगिक समानता तथा सामाजिक समावेशीकरण, मानव अधिकारमा आधारित अवधारणा, उत्प्रेरणा, अनुवाद, मध्यस्थता

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My role as an academic-practitioner will continue. I am sure that there are many other interesting topics to peak my curiosity. But for now, *la lucha sigue* (the struggle continues)!

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LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

This thesis is based on the following publications:

I White, P. 2015. 'The Spectrum of Motivations, Expectations and Attitudes in Technical Development Cooperation'. *Forum for Development Studies*. 42(1):89-112. DOI: 10.1080/08039410.2014.997790

II White, P. and Devereux, P. 2018. "Learning' Development'. *Forum for Development Studies*. 45(1):119-141. DOI: 10.1080/08039410.2017.1393458

III White, P., 2020. "Bastard children' – Unacknowledged consulting companies in development cooperation'. *International Development Planning Review*. 42(2): 219-240.

IV White, P. and Haapala, J. 2019. 'Technical Advisors as Brokers: Translating gender equality and human rights policies and values into practice in the water sector in Nepal', *European Journal of Development Research,* Vol. 31, Iss. 3, (Jul 2019): 643-662. DOI: 10.1057/s41287-018-0173-0

V Haapala, J. and White, P. 2018. 'Development through Bricoleurs: Portraying Local Personnel's Role in Implementation of Water Resources Development in Rural Nepal'. *Water Alternatives* 11(3): 979-998

VI White, P., Rautanen, S-L., Nepal, P. 2017. 'Operationalising the right to water and sanitation and gender equality via appropriate technology in rural Nepal' in Mariateresa Garrido V. (ed) *Human Rights and Technology. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. UPEACE Press, Costa Rica. p. 217-239

VII White, P. and Haapala, J. 2018. 'Water security and social inclusion: Local governance within the newly established rural municipalities in Nepal'. *New Angle: Nepal journal of social science and public policy. Vol.5, Issue 1*. Special issue on Water security, governance and justice in the Himalaya under a changing climate.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

ARTICLE I – Sole author.

ARTICLE II – Pamela White is fully responsible for the idea of the study, fully responsible for the research design and theoretical framing, fully responsible for data collection, mainly responsible for data analysis and interpretations, and mainly responsible for the writing and editing processes. The co-author Peter Devereux contributed his expertise by providing knowledge about international volunteering and assisting with the writing of the early versions. An early version of this article was first presented in an earlier version in the ISTR Conference in Stockholm in July 2016.

ARTICLE III – Sole author

ARTICLE IV – Pamela White is fully responsible for the idea of the study, mainly responsible for the research design and theoretical framing, fully responsible for data collection, mainly responsible for data analysis and interpretations, and shared responsibility for the writing and editing processes. The co-author Juho Haapala contributed his expertise by providing ideas for the theoretical framing and approach, and assisting with the writing and editing.

ARTICLE V – Pamela White is jointly responsible for the idea of the study together with the lead-author Juho Haapala, jointly responsible for the research design together with the lead-author, contributed to the theoretical framing, study planning, questionnaire preparation and testing, interviews, data analysis and interpretations, and contributed equally to the writing process together with Haapala. She collected the initial field data, while the main part of the data was collected by Haapala. This article was also included in the doctoral dissertation of Juho Haapala in Aalto University in 2018.

ARTICLE VI – Pamela White was the lead author for this article. She prepared the first draft alone, then led the finalisation together with the other authors. Sanna-Leena Rautanen then contributed to the writing and editing, and Pallab Nepal provided data from one of the projects.

ARTICLE VII – Pamela White was the lead author for this article. White and Haapala jointly designed the methodology, collected the data and wrote up the article together.

ABBREVIATIONS

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DfID	Department for International Development
EU	European Union
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GoF	Government of Finland
GoN	Government of Nepal
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IDO	International Development Organisation
JE	Junior Expert
JPO	Junior Professional Officer
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee
RM	Rural Municipality
RVWRMP	Rural Village Water Resources Management Project
RWSSP-WN	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TA	Technical Assistance / Advisor
TC	Technical Cooperation
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
WASH	Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene
WSS	Water Supply and Sanitation

1 INTRODUCTION

Development cooperation is a complex interaction of politics, institutions, money, infrastructure and equipment. It involves a chain of individuals, working in different organisations, and bringing their own motivations and ethical standpoints to their work. Most study of development cooperation concerns macro issues such as political economy, the positive or negative impacts, capacities developed, sustainability or whether the methods are appropriate. Public discourse and political decision-making on aid mostly concerns money, and how much or little is spent, in the eyes of the taxpayers or politicians in donor countries. Research on the actual practises on the ground and especially what is called the technical assistance (also known as technical cooperation) aspects, or people working in development cooperation, is more limited (only emerging in the Aidland discourse that I will discuss). They are generally invisible in the big debates of development. The broader objective to which this research contributes is to investigate the role of one form of development cooperation – the role of technical development cooperation and the contribution of individuals (and their organisations) in it.

In my studies, rather than considering the much researched political and institutional questions regarding global development and development cooperation, I have focused more on the people working in 'aid', and in particular on the specific modality of technical assistance (TA), also known as technical cooperation (TC), in its various forms. Why was I interested to study this topic? I have very personal motivations as I myself have spent more than 30 years in development work, in technical cooperation of various types. I have found it interesting to reflect on my own journey, alongside those of many others working in the sector. This involved some consideration of whether I myself am 'doing good', or just doing my job; and what are the ideal characteristics for the TA I recruit? This is discussed more in the synthesis (as well as in the first article). I wasn't very clear on where the research would lead, but gradually as I read and began to interview my first respondents, the topics emerged.

Technical inputs are an important element of development cooperation, although rarely discussed. It is important to note that this has a particular connotation in development cooperation. While in everyday life, 'technical' might bring hands-on engineering aspects to mind; in development, this can mean any form of soft and hard skills and advice. In my first article I consider the definition of technical development cooperation, and it is worth repeating here, as this is a critical element of my work (White, 2015). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) defines two broad strands within development cooperation:

> "The first comprises physical infrastructure, including the buildings, utilities, transport and machinery necessary for production. The second consists of the skills and productive aptitudes available in the economy. Technical co-operation (TC) addresses the second strand, and comprises activities designed to increase the capacity of developing countries. It can in turn be divided into two categories, since the increase can be achieved either through direct supply of skills from outside, or by efforts to enhance the capacities of the local population." (OECD, 2006, p. 112)

Within this, the OECD divides up the TC into three categories (OECD, 2006, p. 112):

- Study assistance through scholarships and traineeships;
- Supply of personnel, including experts, teachers and volunteers, from the donor country, or funding of such personnel from the recipient country or other developing countries (South-South co-operation);
- Research on the problems of developing countries, including tropical crops and diseases.

My work focuses on the second category.

The OECD described the historic nature of TC, with examples of Japan hiring western experts to build its infrastructure in the 19th century, or the recruitment of European architects to support the construction of St Petersburg in 1703 (OECD, 2006, p.115). This continues to the present day, such as the movement of information technology experts to work in Silicon Valley. However, my focus is narrower.

I consider a broad definition of international and national development workers, encompassing a spectrum of roles of foreigners working in developing countries. My focus is mainly Finns for quite practical reasons, as I am based in Finland and am a member of this group myself (an academic-practitioner), working in the Finnish development networks. Consequently, I know this group well, and have access to considerable information regarding different types of TA. As discussed below, Finnish TA is unique in some ways. Finland is a very small country with almost no colonial or imperialist baggage, which has influenced many of the attitudes and behaviours of TA from the UK, USA, and many European countries, according to researchers such as Crewe and Harrison (1998), Stirrat (2000, 2008), or Kothari (2005, 2006).

I also study locals working for development projects or organisations within their own country (in my case study articles, I focus on Nepalese development workers working in bilateral projects in Nepal). Nepal was chosen as the focus country as I have been working there continuously over the last ten years, as both a home office project director and a short-term consultant on water resources, local government and renewable energy projects. This gave me very good access at field level to the projects I studied, and others. The definition of development workers can also include experts from developing countries working in other third countries (particularly for

the United Nations (UN)), though my study does not consider them (this would be an interesting area of research for the future).

Throughout this synthesis it can be seen that different writers refer to technical assistance (TA) and others to technical cooperation (TC). Partly this is an issue of political discourse, with the emphasis in TC perhaps being the theoretically increasing power of the recipient country. I will refer to TA, as this is the most commonly used term, but I consider the terms are interchangeable.

Some of these people are well paid and some fund themselves. Employers range from universities, NGOs, recipient country organisations, bilateral and multilaterally funded donor projects and agencies and embassies. By 2010, the OECD defined technical cooperation as 'the provision of *know-how in the form of personnel* . . . this comprises activities financed by a donor country whose primary purpose is to augment the level of knowledge, skills, technical know-how or productive aptitudes of the population of developing countries'. The definition also includes volunteers 'under wholly or partly publicly financed or publicly controlled volunteer programmes, receiving a stipend in compensation for their services', as well as development researchers funded by the donor (OECD/DAC, 2010). A more traditional definition of technical assistance refers to long- or short-term consultants or 'experts'; however, in my thesis I consider technical assistance broadly. In my first two articles I consider the full spectrum of TA, also including students, NGO staff, self-funded volunteers; and Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) in bilateral projects and multilateral organisations. However, the later articles look more at consultants.

My overall question is: What is the role, motivations and contribution of individuals and organisations in development cooperation? This includes the attitudes, motivations and roles of donor government staff, consulting companies, NGOs and researchers, the beneficiaries themselves, local governments, and the persons involved in the provision of technical assistance. All these groups have the chance to contribute to, or to impede development activities. My research drills down particularly to the role of the latter group – the technical advisors (with a specific focus on Finnish development cooperation).

The research approaches different concepts of technical assistance from many directions. It covers the different individual motivations for working in development, from students of development studies and researchers, through people working in many types of role, from NGOs, to consulting companies, governments and multilateral organisations – what I have referred to as the spectrum of technical cooperation. The earlier articles looked particularly at Finnish experts or various types, as well as students of development studies. The little analysed role of consulting companies working in development is the subject of a further paper. I then used two Finnish funded rural water management projects in Nepal as case studies. The articles considered the role of technical assistance in practice. I examine the way that the international and

Nepali experts translate the values and policies of donors and recipient governments into practice, and feed practices and learning back up to the policy setters and donors. This is supported with a chapter on operationalising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and human rights in Nepal. And finally, I consider the role of the TA in supporting development of the nascent local governments in Nepal, building their capacities to secure safe water for all. The methodology includes questionnaires, interviews, and work with two bilateral projects. These are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Research questions, methods and main findings of each article

Articles	**Research question**	**Methodologies**	**Findings**
I. White, P. 2015. 'The Spectrum of Motivations, Expectations and Attitudes in Technical Development Cooperation'. *Forum for Development Studies,* Volume 42, Issue 1, January 2015, pp 89-112	What are the motivations and experiences of persons working in different technical cooperation roles within international development cooperation?	Literature review Interviews Questionnaire Participatory observation	An element of altruism and adventure were common for many of the respondents, but was more frequently vocalised by the older respondents (who 'fell into' development), while career imperatives appeared to be more important for the younger cohort (many of whom had specifically studied for this career). This was irrespective of the type of role they had worked in (NGO, consultant, etc.). Work in the field of international development moulds participants socially and organisationally, giving a shared vocabulary and ethical viewpoint, a form of habitus.
II. White, P. and Devereux, P. 2018. ''Learning' Development' *Forum for Development Studies*. 45(1):119-141	What are the motivations and pathways for working in international development of Finnish students of development studies? Should development studies be a tool to socialise young entrants for a career in development cooperation, and if so, what sort of training is appropriate?	Literature review Interviews Questionnaire	There is a range of motivations and experience of those studying for, and engaged in, a career in international development. There is a tension between the teaching of critical development theory, and vocational skills that students felt they needed. Co-production, combining academic courses and research, with reflective and experiential practice, could be a way forward.

	How can we create the space for motivating and achieving better development practice and practitioners?		
III. White, P. 2020. ‘‘Bastard children’ – Unacknowledged consulting companies in development cooperation’. *International Development Planning Review*. 42(2): 219-240	What is the role of development consulting companies and how does it differ from standard private sector operations at home or abroad? Is it ethically appropriate to make money from poverty reduction – and is it even financially viable? Why are consultancy companies needed in development cooperation?	Literature review Review of practices Interviews Participatory observation	Consulting companies are constrained by the specifications of the donor and partner organisation (in a principal-agent relationship), leaving only limited space to act independently to go beyond the project document or to ‘do good’ more directly. The dramatic decrease in technical assistance budgets over recent years, along with increasing bureaucracy, has caused profits to diminish and many companies have disappeared, taking institutional memory with them. However, if the donors wish to maintain institutional memory, assert some policy guidance and have contact with work on the ground in developing countries, technical assistance via consulting companies plays an important role.
IV. White, P. and Haapala, J. 2019. ‘Technical Advisors as Brokers: Translating gender equality and human rights policies and values into practice in the water sector in Nepal’, European *Journal of Development Research*, Vol. 31, Iss. 3, (Jul 2019): 643-662	Should the values and cultural norms of the most powerful members of the local community prevail, even if this limits the human rights of the disadvantaged and maintains the status quo? Is it valid for a project, in the hands of TA, to take a stand and implement development policy? What is the role of the project staff?	Case study Literature review Interviews Participatory observation	Long term TA involvement supports the ability of disenfranchised members of communities to claim their rights. The TA are playing a role of social mobilisation, aiming for fundamental change in the community. They are also critical in linking policy and values from above, with local realities and experiences from the ground. Technical assistance (both as a modality, and particularly the individuals involved) has an indispensable role in facilitating sustainable, equitable, and inclusive rural development

			outcomes in socio-culturally difficult operational environments.
V. Haapala, J. and White, P. 2018. 'Development through Bricoleurs: Portraying Local Personnel's Role in Implementation of Water Resources Development in Rural Nepal'. *Water Alternatives* 11(3): 979-998	What is the role and personal motivations of Nepali technical assistance at the grassroots operational level? What challenges do the implementing staff encounter in relation to the steering policies, project modalities, local communities and partners in government administration?	Case study Literature review Questionnaires Focus groups Participatory observation	Much of the actual implementation process at the grassroots is determined by informal, improvised, and fuzzy institutional surroundings, quite different to designed or regulated governance environs. The personal motivations and the ability of the staff to operate effectively in these less-regulated environs determines many of the implementation outcomes at the grassroots. The cultural environs, power relations, skills and knowledge, past experiences, different world views, and individual concerns shaped the interactions and individuals' choices in practice, rather than only rational choice, guidelines or regulations. The findings highlighted the importance of collaborative, adaptive processes with highly flexible designs, and adaptive capacity and learning in implementation.
VI. White, P., Rautanen, S-L., Nepal, P. 2017. 'Operationalising the right to water and sanitation and gender equality via appropriate technology in rural Nepal'. *Human Rights and Technology. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.	How can simple rural technologies make a contribution to achieving human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? How can the principles be operationalized in practice, taking the protection of human rights and the use of technology within the framework of the 2030 Agenda as the point of	Case study Literature review Project data Participatory observation	The case study projects have successfully introduced rights-based concepts and planned and implemented infrastructure activities. However, simply providing appropriate technology is not enough. It is important that the technology is applied within a strong planning and implementation framework, integrated in local government and communities, and supported with skilful facilitation from technical assistance. Involving

UPEACE Press, Costa Rica.	entry with a particular focus on gender equality, water and sanitation? What 'soft' elements, beyond the technology are needed?		communities from the start helps create a high level of ownership, which then supports sustainability.
VII. White, P. and Haapala, J. 2018. 'Water security and social inclusion: Local governance within the newly established rural municipalities in Nepal'. *New Angle: Nepal journal of social science and public policy*. Vol.5, Issue 1	What is the current status of newly established rural municipalities in remote areas of Sudur Paschim (Far West) and Karnali Provinces, in terms of their institutional capacity to implement inclusive water governance and water security in collaboration with a donor-funded project (the Rural Village Water Resources Management Project, RVWRMP)?	Case study Literature review Workshop Interviews Participatory observation	The rural municipalities are currently struggling with weaknesses in staffing, infrastructure and institutions, following the first local elections in nearly 20 years. In such a weak institutional environment, external technical assistance can play important facilitation and implementation support roles. The article describes the efforts of a donor-funded project to support the fledgling rural municipalities, and demonstrate ways to build their capacities to secure safe water for all. In particular, the municipalities need assistance in involving women and disadvantaged groups and ensuring transparency and good governance. This is a novel article, as there has been very little published on the new situation following the decentralisation in Nepal.

The overall research questions can be grouped into three parts:

a. What are the roles and motivations of individuals and the consulting companies working in development cooperation?
b. What contribution can (or should?) these individuals and companies make to translating norms, regulatory frameworks and values into practice in complex operating environments?
c. What is the role of technical assistance in achieving sustainable and equitable water governance in Nepal?

In the following chapters I begin with a discussion of the theoretical and conceptual framework I use, and then further elaborate my own entry to development, with some reflection on the paths I have followed. I provide

some background on research on development cooperation, and the technical assistance modality in development. I then consider the major approaches and themes regarding technical assistance and development cooperation that emerged in my research, including some of the big issues of motivations, incentives and principal-agent theory. I move on to present the history of Finnish TA and set the scene more specifically regarding TA in Finnish-funded rural water supply and sanitation projects in Nepal. I discuss the methodologies used, and the ethical considerations, before summarising the published articles. I finish with my conclusions and some recommendations.

There is very little research focusing on Finns working in development, as well as on the local level TA working at grassroots level in projects. The consideration of the motivations, attitudes and roles of these 'go-betweens' gives this research novelty. In addition, there is little research worldwide on consulting companies working in development. They are virtually invisible, both in official discourses and in development research. Shining a light at these aspects is a particular contribution of my research.

2 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Positivism, Critical realism and Constructivism

Positivism holds that society, like the physical world, operates according to general laws; that all authentic knowledge can be verified and that the only valid knowledge is scientific. It advocates application of natural sciences methods to the study of social science issues (Mikkelsen, 2005). Some of the roots of this lie in the Enlightenment, which stressed the importance of reason (Stirrat, 2000, 2008). It could be argued that the more technical practitioner-based views of development are positivist, with practitioners considering the country or sector where they work, and looking to collect data, design projects and solve problems that they see. Stirrat describes particularly short-term consultants as adhering to a 'culture of modernity', and having faith in rational TORs, checklists and report formats (Stirrat, 2000). The difficulty is that in development, problems are rarely only technical. Byskov (2017) also argues that the positivist assumption is that scientific knowledge is superior to local knowledge and excludes socio-cultural values and contexts. This is of course the basis of many of the critiques of development (eg. Ferguson, 1994; Chambers, 2006; Easterly, 2006).

I come from a background in natural sciences and veterinary medicine. This predisposes me to a generally positivist view regarding 'hard scientific facts'. The assumption is that there is a reality that exists outside of our perception of it, which follows general laws (Schutt, 2004). Yet projects are a much more complicated reality, and scientifically proving that an outcome or impact is truly the result of the project or activity is rarely possible. Some apply evaluation methods such as Randomised Control Trials (RCTs), aiming to establish control groups and get clear measurements of results; yet they are better applied to vaccination trials than to development projects. Fforde (2018) pointed out the "clear absence of clear and knowable predictive relations between causes and effects … contrary to what is implied by international development practices. Such practices assume a single truth, when evidently there is a multitude of beliefs." (p.4)

For the reasons outlined above, in development cooperation, based as it is on social interactions rather than science, it is clear to me that positivism is not a useful viewpoint. Jasanoff (2007), a professor of science and technology studies, argued that there are seldom clear, scientifically-proven, binary choices for policy in real life. "We need disciplined methods to accommodate the partiality of scientific knowledge and to act under irredeemable uncertainty. Let us call these the technologies of humility. These technologies

compel us to reflect on the sources of ambiguity, indeterminacy and complexity." (p.33)

A theoretical approach that fits better to my views is critical realism. Critical realism considers normative aspects, interrogating the existing situation and power structures, and looking for a way forward (Mikkelsen, 2005). It recognises that our knowledge is socially and culturally situated. There may be a 'reality' but our knowledge of it is influenced by our position, context and activities. Our understanding of the world is always likely to be fallible, as we will either have a detailed view and miss the big picture, or vice versa. It aims to investigate and describe the nature of social settings, interrogating irregularities and experiences as a means to understand complex and changing situations, but doesn't assume a perfect explanation or automatic causation (Archer et al, 2016). Baert (1998) proposed that there is no need for a single scientific method across the social and the natural sciences; that while both should be subject to open debate and criticism, there is no possibility to develop infallible models in social sciences. One's values and interests always affect the research process. Instead methodological pluralism and qualitative approaches are to be encouraged in social sciences.

Based on the above theoretical discussion, I wish to go a step further and take a predominantly constructivist paradigm. Constructivism contends that learning is an active, constructive process. People actively construct or create their own subjective representations of objective reality. Since new information is linked to prior knowledge, mental representations are subjective. It sees knowledge as created in interaction among investigator and respondents (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Schutt, 2004).

> "Knowledge consists of those constructions about which there is relative consensus (or at least some movement toward consensus) among those competent (and, in the case of more arcane material, trusted) to interpret the substance of the construction. Multiple "knowledges" can coexist when equally competent (or trusted) interpreters disagree, and/or depending on social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors that differentiate the interpreters. These constructions are subject to continuous revision, with changes most likely to occur when relatively different constructions are brought into juxtaposition in a dialectical context." Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.113)

In other words, there are very few clear cause and effect relationships in development cooperation. I assume that there is no objective truth, nor a blanket solution to the wicked problems of development. I have approached this study through my *habitus*. Unlike in my former profession as a veterinarian, I cannot find the precise cause of a condition or provide an infallible treatment or recommendation. This is my perspective only, although I have aimed to limit my potential biases. Mayer (2017) notes 'Different informants, different researcher and different theoretical analyses would provide a different view, just as relevant and important.' (p.77).

Methodological individualism and collectivism

Methodological individualism holds that the most appropriate social science research is derived through the study of individuals: while methodological collectivism focuses on the idea that it is more appropriate to focus on the study of group organisations, forces, processes and problems. (Parker, 2006). List and Spiekermann (2013) stated that "Political science is divided between methodological individualists, who seek to explain political phenomena by reference to individuals and their interactions, and holists (or non-reductionists), who consider some higher-level social entities or properties such as states, institutions, or cultures ontologically or causally significant" (p.629).... "methodological individualism is the thesis that good social-scientific explanations should refer solely to facts about individuals and their interactions, not to any higher-level social entities, properties, or causes." (p.630). I find myself in between the two. In this thesis I contend that individuals at all levels have an important role in the implementation of development cooperation – speaking about humans in their working roles, rather than named persons. Individuals in donor and recipient governments, and community level actors are all important for facilitating or blocking development activities; just as are the TA themselves. All bring in their own motivations, values and incentives (discussed further below). However, I cannot rule out the role of institutions or cultures as well, as clearly in the case studies the local cultures and institutions (both project imposed and community-based) are constantly interacting with each other and with the individuals involved. In addition, evidence of a *habitus* among development workers suggests that there is also a significant role for the development 'culture'.

Habitus

Social philosopher and anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu popularised the concept of *habitus* – that we are shaped by the circumstances and culture surrounding us and become accustomed to them. It influences our lifestyle, values, perceptions, actions and expectations. He did not suggest that we are bound to act according to our upbringing. Rather, he considered that one's practice results from relations between one's dispositions (habitus) and one's position (capital) in a field, within the current state of play of that social arena (field). In other words, we act according to the interaction between our habitus and our current circumstances. (Grenfell, 2014) 'To understand practices we need to understand both the evolving fields within which actors are situated and the evolving habituses which those actors bring to their social fields of practice' (Grenfell, 2014, p.52). It was notable, from my entry to this research (Article I) that there was a development habitus, at least among those who continued to work in development beyond their first experience. A national (Finnish) habitus was noted by Koponen et al (2012). They argued that individuals "carry their historical and cultural package with them; they work

within the parameters of the present aid system and discourse; and they work in specific social and cultural environments which are likely to be very foreign to those they are used to". (p.158) Habitus is the reason why, although TA may move from one location to another, they will tend to espouse the same opinions and act in similar ways. Eyben argues that it is also a form of power (Eyben, 2008). I argue that it is that very work in such specific environments that produces a development habitus, crossing nationalities.

An analogy can be found in the work of Desmond (2007), who researched forest fire fighters in the United States, and identified a habitus among them. While this is a totally different field to development work, I considered it was relevant. The fire fighters work in difficult and sometimes hazardous conditions, and tend to bond together. Their work has many similarities to that of development workers, working in developing countries, facing both cultural barriers and homesickness, and more serious risks of accidents and physical violence). Firefighters also feel that they are 'doing good' – something that most development workers can identify with, even if not using those words. Wacquant (2011) also took up the topic of habitus in his reflections on becoming a prize fighter. He described habitus as a set of acquired dispositions, achieved via physical and social actions and repetitions that build new abilities and desires, and linked to specific locations and settings. He considers that individuals with different life experiences will have gained varied ways of thinking, feeling, and acting; and that the socially constituted cognitive structures that make up habitus are malleable and transmissible. Despite the existence of formal rules and norms, it is this habitus that guarantees the conformity of practices within a group. (Wacquant 2011).

Other authors studying development cooperation have also recognised habitus and the influence it had on their behaviour, such as Mosse (2004, 2005), Eriksson Baaz (2005), and Shutt (2006). Haas (1992) defined epistemic communities as including:

> (1) a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide a value-based rationale for the social action of community members; (2) shared causal beliefs, which are derived from their analysis of practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems in their domain and which then serve as the basis for elucidating the multiple linkages between possible policy actions and desired outcomes; (3) shared notions of validity – that is, intersubjective, internally defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge in the domain of their expertise; and (4) a common policy enterprise – that is, a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which their professional competence is directed, presumably out of the conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence. (Haas 1992, p. 3).

This definition is very close to that of habitus. While Haas referred to those working in international development, this could equally apply to other types of epistemic communities, such as doctors or teachers, who work under at

times difficult conditions, and at least partly for altruistic reasons. Koch and Weingart (2017) refer to the fact that although development workers 'may come from different disciplines and backgrounds, they share a set of normative and causal beliefs, notions of validity and a common policy enterprise' (p.66). The increasing professionalization of the development field shapes the pool of people who enter it and their attitudes toward it. Professionalization involves both instilling particular skills and attitudes and creating barriers to entry for those who lack these skills or attitudes (Abbott, 1988).

Stirrat (2000) proposed that a culture of consultancy existed among short–term consultants. This is partly based on the colonial past of some, as well as a belief in modernism and enlightenment, and a shared world view and language. Rajak and Stirrat (2011) described the flow of resources through many channels from multilateral and bilateral sources to NGOs, recipient governments and NGOs. They argue that the result is that many commercial companies and NGOs, as well as individuals, participate in a highly inter-dependent system, and experience pressure towards conformity. They describe a common career path from volunteer, to NGO staffer and further to bilateral or multilateral work (precisely my own path). They also note that while some remain technical specialists their whole lives, many move into administrative or generalist roles. Yet most remain in the industry (again, my own experience). However, while TA may consider themselves to be cosmopolitan, Rajak and Stirrat argue that they are commonly based in capital cities, working long hours and socially cocooned in an expatriate mielleux. This reinforces the likelihood of absorbing the development habitus, rather than genuinely picking up local cultural influences.

I consider habitus to be an important element of development work. The group culture has emerged as a result of the shared motivations, exposure to the vocabulary and practices of development (in policies, strategies and other documents), and the common issues rising in the field. It is also a result of living and working in difficult conditions. There is also an element of self-censorship. I argue that the ideology of altruism (discussed further below) sets development workers apart from other Western professionals working outside their country (e.g. in military, diplomatic or business fields), as does Fechter (2012a). Naturally, it is likely that army personnel, for example, have their own habitus. The vocational calling that has traditionally been felt, at least to some degree by most development workers, and the shared language and values, is clear in my interviews - both with international and local experts.

I can also see the influence of habitus in my own experience. As with Haas (1992), I share the value base regarding the importance of work for sustainable development, and the language and behaviours of development workers; the causal beliefs of development problems and potential policy and practical actions; and a common policy enterprise. It also appears that there is a role of habitus interacting with the principal-actor relationships of the development network (Gibson et al, discussed in this synthesis).

2.2 MY PERSONAL ENTRY POINT

How did I become interested in the complicated sphere of development cooperation, and what experiences led me to develop my point of view? I began my working life in a very technical role, working as a veterinarian in Australia and England. I became interested in politics and involved in the solidarity movement with the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua during the 1980s. I travelled to Nicaragua first as a brigadista (an unpaid volunteer, learning and working in solidarity with local communities), and then continued working in solidarity activities in the UK and Australia. In the late 1980s I returned to Nicaragua as a long-term volunteer (or cooperante, receiving a stipend) with the Australian Volunteers Abroad programme, working as a veterinarian for the Nicaraguan Government. My main motivation was to support the revolution.

I did not consider any of these steps as good career moves. To stay in my first career as a veterinarian would have led to a high income and relatively stable life. By comparison, I was opting for work on a very low stipend (initially, 200 USD/month) under much more difficult circumstances during a civil war. At that stage I had no idea that a career as a professional development worker existed. The volunteer program emphasised experiential learning and relationship building. Technical assistance was important but complementary. Like many other westerners working in development in the 1970s and 1980s, I was taking technical skills overseas, while also learning a lot and having an exciting experience. In 1980s, development studies courses didn't exist and we bumbled into a new culture. This was common to the Finnish experience too, as I discovered when I later conducted interviews with Finnish development workers. Eyben (2012 and 2014) also describes this experience.

Looking back at diaries from the time, I struggled to find very profound thoughts on the role of a development worker. Most pages were filled with the mundane details of life (how crowded the bus was, what was happening at work, frustrations with Spanish language and social events) as well as the ongoing political situation. In one passage from my early days in the solidarity movement, I wrote about a long-term activist who I admired, and wondered if I could ever be as selfless as him. In reality, I presume he wasn't perfectly altruistic either - I am sure he was gaining a lot from his life experiences. I also recall, when a visiting Spanish army officer in Nicaragua laughed at my low living allowance, I proudly retorted that I was earning more than money. Yet none of us can normally live from altruism alone.

After almost three years I was satisfied that my contribution was useful in parts. At the same time, I consider I also learned an enormous amount (both professionally and personally), particularly from my co-workers – something that led me to continue to work in development. I had been inspired by Nicaraguan revolutionary ideas and my eyes were opened by the writing of Freire (1970). I had learned another language, travelled, danced a lot, and

understood something of another culture. Naturally it wasn't all good times. I had regular diarrhoea and homesickness, irregular electricity and water supply. I was pinned down on the ground during one gun battle, and struggled with overfull buses or hitching to work. I was frustrated at times by my co-workers' passivity – for instance, saying that we couldn't do a small medical trial without a computer. I had seen some examples of projects gone wrong, and picked up some basic understanding of the complexities of aid. I had hopefully not done anything damaging. I had so little power that this would have been unlikely, even if I had been particularly arrogant or insensitive (which I hope I wasn't!). I understood better the reality of the field and I worked at the level of ordinary Nicaraguans, facing similar constraints, rather than having access to much money and equipment (something that was commented on and appreciated by my co-workers). However, I also had more freedom than consultants, without a tight Terms of Reference (TOR), reports and outcomes to achieve.

When working as a long-term volunteer, I considered consultants to be overpaid and too removed from real life. I felt at the time that their high salaries and benefits isolated them from the 'normal' Nicaraguans with whom I identified. I felt that they could not understand the difficulties we faced daily in the Ministry of Agriculture, let alone the hardships of the campesinos. I was even critical of the Finnish Volunteer Service (my future husband among them!), who had the best pay and conditions of the western volunteers – though naturally not close to consultants' fee rates. Of course, even the small allowance that I received put me in a somewhat stronger financial position than my local colleagues, who probably felt the same way about me. And most importantly – I could always leave Nicaragua. This is always the greatest divider between foreign development workers and locals.

Back in Australia I worked for the same international volunteer sending agency (an NGO) that had sent me away, continued to be involved in solidarity activities, and volunteered on the committee of another international NGO. I left my veterinary career behind and development became 'what I did'. I needed to learn more and studied for a Master's degree in International Development.

Following a move to Finland for family reasons, it proved difficult to continue to work in the NGO sector as a new immigrant with poor Finnish language skills. I was lucky to find work in small consulting company. Having previously scorned consultants, I was becoming one myself! I learned about the values, business modalities and financial realities governing consulting companies from the inside, as each of the companies I worked for was forced to merge with others, in order to survive the environment of falling profits. My employer changed name, and the owners changed - from private individuals, to the National Board of Education, to the University of Helsinki (and other universities), and finally to the Association of Local and Regional Authorities. Now employed by a company, I learned to prepare tenders for donors to implement projects or assignments, to manage projects and to carry out

consultancies myself, in many countries and with a broad range of donors and modalities. The difference from work as a long-term volunteer was immediately evident. When a short-term consultant, in particular, arrives in a project they are expected to have an opinion and give advice from day one, without the chance to build relationships and learn from locals.

I am not aiming to be an apologist for consulting companies or technical advisors. I have seen myself where things go wrong. Some international advisors take a very traditional position, considering that their role is technical transfer of their 'expert knowledge', without the need to translate the model to fit local needs and conditions. They may consider that their way is the only correct one and behave in an arrogant manner towards local staff and beneficiaries. Others are more interested in their salary and living conditions, without consideration of whether they provide 'value for money'. My respondents (both consultants and Finnish embassy staff) referred disparagingly to some persons who they felt were focusing on playing golf, rather than the assignment. However, I have also worked with dedicated advisors, living in tough conditions, building great relationships, and developing activities that were very suited to the local needs. Eyben (2012) argues that individual agency can have a huge impact on the planning and implementation of aid projects and programmes, but that this is not a predictable, straight path. It will depend also on the environment around the TA.

Technical assistance is often criticised as being ineffective, overpriced and donor-driven (ActionAid, 2006 and many others – discussed later in this synthesis). The individuals (both international and national) working in development vary enormously, and views, needs and expectations of the beneficiaries are complex. In addition to the person's background, there are elements such as their family situation, working ethos and cultural sensitivity, which are impossible to assess from their CV, but may have a large impact on their effectiveness. Do they have an attitude of 'learning with', or are they more traditional in their approach? Are they really inspired (and inspiring) advisors, or do they simply do their hours? Koch and Weingart (2017) noted that local counterparts emphasised the importance of long-term relationships, attitudes and behavioural patterns of international advisors. They considered that the right mix of expertise, experience and behavioural competencies was necessary to achieve the planned outcomes of an assignments, including knowledge transfer. Yet in practice, the typical process of selection of experts emphasises only their qualifications and CV (as I discuss in Articles III and IV).

I have seen good examples as well as problems in other modalities, from NGOs and UN organisations, development banks and in partner governments and communities globally. The idealised local community or government is also a myth in some settings. At times, corruption abounds or local taboos prevent the participation or benefits reaching some groups. Yet, the dominant development discourse means that local stakeholders are rarely criticised in

public. I have also seen examples where technical cooperation works well. In my work with many different modalities, donors and countries, the common refrain I hear repeatedly is that the vital element that makes an activity a success or a failure is the individuals involved. In the end, I felt that development cooperation needs both good institutions and links, as well as skilled and committed individuals – international and national, donor and recipient. This was the starting point for my research and a hypothesis to be probed.

In particular, I have been lucky to work with two large, Finnish-funded, bilateral water projects in Nepal (and to research a third earlier project). I have worked as a home office project manager, but also a consultant. This gave me the opportunity to travel in the field widely and get a better understanding of local issues. These projects are in some ways a step back to earlier times of development cooperation. They are hybrids in between the "project" and "programme" approaches, having free-standing project units and many staff, but being embedded in the local government structures. They are working at grassroots level, in some of the most remote and un-served parts of the country. This is in contrast to most development staff these days (whether in embassies, projects, multilateral organisations or NGOs), who are normally based in the capital.

Work with these projects and their dedicated and thoughtful staff has exposed me to many issues. We have grappled together with the transfer and translation of technical solutions to the local conditions, but also institutional changes and the brokering of complex values. An example is the work with the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA), and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI). Is it appropriate for outsiders to introduce (and insist on) new ideas and concepts from the national government or donor? Whose values count? This is particularly challenging when it concerns local behaviours that are discriminatory and infringe on human rights. I could also see that the policies that were so carefully crafted, word-by-word, at donor HQ, only served as a general guidance. The project document itself was more important, and the teams needed to find what was possible in the field, with the constraints of time, money and local interests. These issues and the projects themselves are the focus case studies of Articles IV, V, VI and VII in my thesis, as well as many other articles. It has become clear to me from practice that it is impossible to share ideas and make changes at community level without inputs of committed people from all levels. Individuals from any point in the development cooperation 'octangle' (described by Ostrom et al, 2001; and later Gibson et al, 2005) can expedite or hinder an activity.

Thinking back to my younger self, I realise that my perceptions have changed and broadened. I had earlier been very judgemental of others working in better paid roles in development. I describe this positioning in Article I, as being typical of those working within the business, as referred to by other researchers also, such as Fechter, 2012a; Eriksson Baaz, 2005; Shutt, 2006; McWha, 2011 and Stirrat, 2008.

Having worked in many roles, I had become more pragmatic, seeing the advantages and disadvantages of each type of post. Now as a consultant myself I was uncomfortable to find I was now the one who was criticised, viewed with scepticism as the 'greedy consultant', whether overtly or covertly. I had moved from 'missionary' to 'mercenary' (as described by Stirrat, 2008). I was also surprised to discover the margins for consulting companies were not so large any more. Stringent conditions and rules were applied by the donors, in expectation of wrong-doing.

With my 'accidental' career reflecting the overall professionalisation of the industry, I was interested to study the issues further.

3 STUDYING DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

3.1 THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

In order to set the wider context for TA, I will summarise here some of the arguments regarding development cooperation. I emphasise that my work is in the world of development cooperation, not humanitarian aid (usually dealing with emergencies and disasters). This thesis does not deal with humanitarian work, though naturally this forms part of the overall spectrum of development, and there are many people working in that sector.

The definition and concept of 'development' is controversial. Typically, it has been considered synonymous with economic growth - and modernisation. With its connection to the Enlightenment, capitalism and western ideals of equality have been included in some views. "By the standard [developmentalist] definition, development aid is a planned intervention to transfer resources from more well-to-do countries to less-well-to do ones, where the resources are concessional in character and their main objective is promotion of the economic development and welfare of the recipient countries."(Koponen, 1999, p.2). Koponen and Siitonen (2005) note that although the definitions and practices may differ, "the underlying assumption remains that development is desirable and beneficial to all and that a well-intentioned, rationally constructed social intervention will lead to ideal development. Without such morally grounded belief, there would be no development aid." (p. 158) Development was seen by some in the 1950s-70s as "an imitative process in which the less developed nations gradually would transform the traditional societies into the qualities of the modern advanced nations" (Buch-Hansen and Lauridsen, 2012, p.293). This idealised objective to achieve modernisation in an equitable manner was challenged by dependency theory, in which many argued that "what looked like development was actually a process of 'development of underdevelopment' or of 'dependent development'." (Buch-Hansen and Lauridsen, 2012, p.293)

Two opposing views of international development cooperation have been argued. One is the instrumentalist view – the use of development resources and results for commercial or political purposes. This definition can be considered to be at the opposite pole from developmentalism (as described above).

On the other hand, there is a critical view that assumes failure, and sees hidden (intended or unintended) purposes of bureaucratic power or dominance. This was argued in one of the early critical treatments of development projects, when Ferguson (1994) studied a project in Lesotho, and argued that it strengthened the bureaucratic hold on power and depoliticised poverty. The critical view of development is more common in academia. It

holds that the assumptions underpinning development must always be questioned. Koponen (1994) presents this critical view as "the suggestion that development is an ultimately exploitative and harmful exercise in any form, colonial or post-colonial, and that instead of being promoted it should be abolished." (p.674) and that it allows western capitalist powers to ally with local elites and exploit the common people. Venugopal notes the overwhelmingly negative view of critical scholars "In the looking glass world of development, pessimism reigns, and things always fall apart" (Venugopal, 2018, p.238). This critical approach understands development as being defined by power-asymmetries and conflicting interests (Mikkelsen, 2005). It is assumed that development cooperation is fundamentally flawed as it is tied to commercial or foreign policy agendas of neo-colonialism or neoliberalism. It may be highly instrumentalist, in the broad sense, being used to prop up favourable political regimes, or support commercial investments or sales by companies from the donor country (tying aid). This has certainly been the case with many development activities, particularly of the major world players, and particularly during the Cold War. Ignoring the political setting and acting with a theoretically neutral approach, may be both ineffective and counterproductive, as argued by Wildeman and Tartir (2013) with regard to aid given in the highly complex setting of Palestine.

There is usually an instrumentalist objective for aid. As with many OECD countries, in recent times, Finland has used development aid (as well as diplomacy) for political aims – for instance, to try to secure positions in high level posts in UN agencies. This does not necessarily downgrade the developmentalist objectives of the aid, but simply demonstrates that there is a changing mix of purposes. Some of my UN respondents reported that Finland is quite shy to use its influence in comparison with other donors.

Beyond critical approaches to development, subsumed in political arguments about colonialism and neoliberal capitalism, versus a purely technical approach, lies a more pragmatic position. It recognises that development is an incredibly complex field and contains many 'wicked' problems – a category of problems that are intractable and complex, without clear solutions (Venugopal, 2018). It is a contested process, with many agendas and involving discourses and practices which intervene in local society values and practices, as well as the personal and institutional incentives of those involved. "Aid must be seen as a dual phenomenon: it is both a well-intentioned exercise in the rational transfer of resources, and a process of social negotiation and even struggle over the resources themselves. In addition to the explicitly articulated goals there are more hidden ones, a situation in which ends and means easily mix and what are represented as goals may in fact become means and vice versa." (Koponen and Siitonen, 2005, p. 159).

In another, more practical, definition, the instrumentalist view (for instance, van Gastel and Nuijten, 2005) can also refer to the belief that good policy and rational problem solving and the application of instruments such

as logical frameworks[1], will solve evident problems - that the problem with aid lies not in the model but in its application. In 2000, in an instrumentalist approach (in the practical sense) to very complex problems, the United Nations set eight goals for development by 2015 - the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These were a good method to focus attention of the world community, and push for targets at the national level. There were significant achievements in some of the MDG targets worldwide (UN MDG Report 2015) – though the question of causation or correlation is unclear. It was clear that while lip service was given to the MDGs, the funding to achieve them did not necessarily follow plans. For instance, even if MDGs were incorporated in national plans, there does not appear to have been an associated increase in social spending (Seyedsayamdost, 2018). Progress was uneven geographically, and millions of people, especially the poorest and those disadvantaged because of their sex, age, disability, ethnicity or location, were left behind. There were many quantitative targets that were reached - for instance, the number of children enrolled in primary education rose dramatically. Yet qualitatively, many targets were missed. Overcrowding of insufficiently resourced schools led to poor quality education for attending children. Critical views, such as Ilcan and Philips (2010), argued that while the MDGs were presented as a neutral, technical tool, they in fact represented neoliberal rationalities, focusing on data collection and information and profiling, and particularly on the United Nations agencies, rather than considering the social effects of the process. I agree to some extent with the criticisms, given the technocratic efforts required to collect the data and respond to the quantitative targets, ignoring other qualitative aspects. This can lead to a process of counting what can be counted, but not necessarily what counts. However, I can also see the benefits of setting a benchmark and focusing attention.

Taking the MDGs forward and hopefully learning from some of the mistakes, the UN voted for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 goals. The SDGs are even more complicated than the MDGs, and went through an exhaustive process of debate and target setting. They have been criticised extensively. One strength is that they include all countries, rather than only developing countries. At this stage, their impact and the ways in which they might affect policy and planning are still unclear. In the Nepal case study projects I work with, the work is well in line with SDGs, and reporting reflects them. However, they were not planned as a response to the SDG targets. There is a risk that, as with many high-level policies, they become more a vocabulary for discussion rather than providing guidance or funding. One of my articles deals with the SDGs and the Human right to water and sanitation (Article VI).

[1] Logical frameworks, or logframes (and more recently, results frameworks), are a tool applied for project planning and management. They typically contain Activities, Outputs, Purpose and Goal – as well as indicators for measurement of progress, sources of verification and assumptions. They are often criticised for being simplistic representations of complex problems, and too inflexible

Moyo (2009) and Easterly (2006) criticised the aid industry from different viewpoints, arguing that it caused, rather than relieved problems. Aid has created dependency and corruption in many countries. Anyone who has worked in countries with a long history of receiving aid, will have witnessed these evils, whether on a large scale or individual level. Naturally those problems may also beset the donor countries and companies. I myself, both as a development worker and researcher, am 'dependent' on aid.

It is fair to say that the balance of developmentalist and instrumentalist (in the sense of using aid of political purposes) aims are evident to a lesser or greater degree at different times and in the motivations of different donor countries. The donor government must balance humanitarian and developmentalist aims to improve global development, alongside the instrumentalist need to defend the interests of its citizens (and perhaps companies), and weigh up the opportunity costs of using taxes for development cooperation.

The image of various actors and modalities in development has changed during recent decades. In the 1960s and 1970s the state was seen as the prime mover of development and most donors focused on support to recipient governments – either directly via bilateral support or indirectly via international financing institutions such as the World Bank. In the 1980s, neoliberal policy emerged, and the private sector grew in favour. Donor countries, including Finland, promoted their own interests in development (including those of the Finnish private sector), but emphasised increasing competition and privatisation in recipient countries. Schulpen and Gibbon (2002) described how by the end of the 1990s development had reached a consensus that the main route to achieve poverty reduction was economic growth, via private sector activities. At the same time, with the end of the Cold War, one justification for government to government aid support had fallen away.

There has been a waxing and waning in enthusiasm between budget support, sectoral programme support and projects, with pros and cons recognised for each modality. Donors often prefer projects as they give more direct donor control of management (Stewart, 2012). At the same time, most donors also participated in the OECD-DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and signed up to the Paris Declaration in 2005, and the Accra Agenda for Action in 2010, in order to reduce project aid inefficiencies by routing funding directly to recipient country budgets[2]. The aid effectiveness agenda promoted country ownership[3] and poverty reduction, donor harmonisation and alignment, improved governance, management for results and mutual accountability (Odén and Wohlgemuth, 2011; Stern et al 2008). Yet in practice, donor harmonisation and alignment proved difficult to

[2] http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm

[3] Lachapelle, 2008, defined ownership as including ownership in process (who has a voice and whose voice is heard?); in outcome (who has influence over decisions and what results from the effort?); and in distribution (who is affected by the process and outcome?). This concept plays an important role in development discourse, both at the national government level and regarding community ownership.

achieve. Most donors have paid lip service to these agendas, but in practice, aid continues to be disbursed by donors without proper co-ordination with national institutional structures, usually due to concerns about to corruption and weak implementation capacity. Even harmonisation of procedures between EU countries seems impossible.

By 2019, private sector support is the mantra of most donors. In general, this refers to donor or recipient country companies producing or extracting tangible goods. It usually does not apply to consulting companies providing technical assistance (other than to a minor degree regarding trust funds in development banks, tied to TA from specific countries), although TA may be part of the modality of implementing private sector projects.

Cross-cutting issues or objectives (which are expected to be considered throughout a development project or programme) have waxed and waned in prominence over the years, including topics such as: gender equality and human rights (discussed later in this synthesis), environmental protection and climate change, good governance, democracy and transparency, and more. The concept of a topic being 'cross-cutting' means that rather than treat it as a free-standing issue or activity, it should be 'mainstreamed' or made an integral dimension of the project or programme's design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Note that the counter argument, particularly with regard to gender equality, is that mainstreaming allows gender to be forgotten altogether! These all form part of the values overlaying development cooperation, as both a condition of receiving the aid, and as an objective in their own right. I argue in my thesis that the TA can play an important role in translating these values into practice, in a way that simple provision of funds will not achieve. I will elaborate on this later in the synthesis.

With many donors, recent years have seen a rising focus on results-based measurement (RBM)[4] and value for money (VfM)[5]. This is partly because there is a genuine interest in maximising the effectiveness of the aid budget and appearing fiscally responsible to taxpayers. Another reason is the fear of negative publicity. Yanguas (2018) explored the VfM concept, which has over-simplified a complex topic and forced development work to focus on things that can be easily counted - for instance, highlighting numbers of recipients and costs of 'things' (eg. books, water recipients) over systems (eg. improved local governance or relationships). This implies that good project management will produce expected results. Yet development is not linear, involves many stakeholders and defies counting. He considers this has clear ethical implications for what donors choose to do (and by extension, consulting companies). A former USAID administrator also described the problem, which he felt was due to extreme risk avoidance and administrative control - 'those development programmes that are most precisely and easily measured are the

[4] Results-based management focuses on the results of the intervention, rather than the earlier attention given to inputs and activities.

[5] Value for money measures the efficiency of an intervention, maximising the outputs for a given level of inputs. This is easier to measure for infrastructure or goods, than for services and more intangible issues such as capacity development.

least transformational, and those programmes that are the most transformational are the least measured' (Natsios, 2010:1). As a result, a considerable amount of time, effort and money is spent on setting indicators that can be measured, whether they are appropriate ways to evaluate the activity or not, discussing tools for risk management, justifying expenditures and maintaining paperwork. Less time is available to focus on the more political and social aspects needed to make the interventions work. (Yanguas, 2018; Chambers, 2017).

Over recent decades, sustainable development has become an important concept in development, particularly with the increasing risk of climate change to development gains. This considers particularly environmental and climate sustainability, but also social, economic, political and institutional elements. It argues that all countries and societies must live within their limits, for instance, by capping greenhouse emissions. The so-called Brundtland Report of 1987 (published by World Commission on Environment and Development of the United Nations) was an important study that recognised the importance of poverty reduction, gender equity, and wealth redistribution. It also emphasised the links between environmental sustainability and anthropogenic pressure, noting that poverty increases environmental pressure. It defined sustainable development as being development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (UN, 1987).

Human development theory has been particularly promoted by Amartya Sen, discussing human capabilities (1999). This was further developed with Martha Nussbaum and other philosophers. The theory argues that looking more broadly at developing a person's 'functionings' (grouped together as capabilities) together with freedom to act, rather than their income, will define their development. Sen defined people's agency as being vital for a person's ability to bring about change and being an active member of society. It considers economic growth as essential, but also distribution, quality of life and other factors. "A person's 'capability' refers to the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for her to achieve. Capability is thus a kind of freedom..... [it can be described as either] the realized functionings (what a person is actually able to do) or the capability set of alternatives she has (her real alternatives)" (Sen, 1999, p. 75). Nussbaum (2003) defined a list of 'central human capabilities' (p. 41-42) and linked to the concept of capabilities being a necessary precursor to exercising human rights. She argues that a broad concept of freedom isn't in line with social justice, as one person's freedoms may interfere with that of others (particularly using examples of men's 'rights' infringing on women). Rather than allowing each society to define what these important freedoms are, she argues that some matters are too important to be left to local cultural traditions and therefore some basic capabilities or rights must be defined in documents of international law, such as The Committee on the Elimination of

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This is important to my thesis as I argue that there is a role for outsiders to propose changes to local cultures.

The Human Development Index is based on the concept of capabilities, with the idea of providing a simple, composite measure of development under these categories. This approach has been criticised, as it is considered neoliberal and focuses more on individual capabilities (returning to the tension between methodological individualism and collectivism). It also can be criticised, as not all individuals will have the agency and capabilities to take actions for sustainable development (for instance, argued by Mustalahti et al, 2019). However, in development projects (at least those funded by OECD-DAC member countries), the focus is usually on development of collective capabilities, and enhancing the community's capacities to make changes happen (agency) and become collective agents of change (Fernández-Baldor et al, 2012). I concur that a combination of the individual's capabilities, motivations and values, and the institutions and cultures they live and work in, are important for development cooperation. In Nepal, the Finnish-supported case study projects managed to support agency and capabilities of both the TA and the local community members to achieve a positive change. However, this is not always the case.

3.2 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AS A MODALITY OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

As noted in the discussions above, few authors have written about the role technical assistance plays within development cooperation. In particular, there has been little consideration given to the technical advisors' opinions, motivations and behaviours. I will now expand on the debates on TA within development.

One argument against TA is that it "..has fallen far short of expectations in terms of capacity building. The very fact that projects have continued for so long, often in the same sectors and same countries, suggests failure." (Action Aid International, 2006, p.26) This is a very broad-brush statement – placing all responsibility on the TA and none with the other stakeholders, in particular with the recipient governments. It is also somewhat outdated, as the aid environment has changed considerably since 2005 and 2006, when Action Aid published its highly critical reports on aid. However, this report does provide a useful summary of the criticisms of TA (though mainly linked to the presumed deficiencies of TA as a tool for capacity building). I return to these critiques in the discussion chapter.

Critiques of TA in the literature generally characterise individuals working in development (usually focusing on consultants) as greedy, arrogant, culturally out of place or colonialist and overly technical. The modality itself is criticised for being expensive, inefficient, ineffective and fostering dependency (Hancock, 1989; Berg, 1993; and many more, discussed below). Post-colonial

development cooperation originated in most countries as technical transfer managed by donor governments (Brett 2003). In the 1980s and 1990s there was a focus on large development projects and technical know-how transfer. Neo-liberal market theory dominated policy and institutional reform programmes in the 1980s (Brett 2003). 'Technical assistance' was a major part of projects 'designed and carried out by Western experts sent to the South to provide a 'tech-fix' to the 'problems' of supposedly impotent, needy societies' (Koch and Weingart, 2017, p.9).

The critique and potential of TA extends also to other points on the spectrum of technical cooperation. For instance, Devereux (2008) argued that, at is worst, volunteering can encompass volunteer tourism, paternalistic charity or career development. It can be straightforward technical assistance. But ideally, it can be an opportunity for cross-cultural learning, friendship, awareness raising and technical exchange (Devereux, 2008, p.358).

Berg (1993) published a UN report arguing that technical cooperation was ineffective, due to its donor-driven nature, leading to inefficient allocation of resources, weak local ownership, and limited commitment (Berg, 1993). In particular, Berg criticised the long-term resident expatriate-counterpart model, which he considered had failed as an instrument for capacity building. He recommended the use of short-term advisors and coaching arrangements, local consultants, and institutional twinning. It is notable that he did not discard the concept of TA altogether.

In 1996 the OECD DAC promoted improvements in the quality of aid delivery, with goals of local ownership and partnership. It was assumed that the role of technical cooperation would decrease, as local stakeholders took over the responsibility. In 2006, the OECD noted that technical cooperation was controversial, and had been criticised "for being too costly, inappropriate to recipients' needs, or fostering dependency" (OECD, 2006, p.111). The Busan Partnership Agreement, endorsed in 2011, no longer spoke of 'technical assistance' and knowledge transfer. Instead, the terms 'knowledge exchange' and 'mutual learning' were used (OECD, 2011, Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness).

Researchers also came to recognise that TA was not a black-and-white modality. A more complex role for TA as participatory facilitators, open to mutual learning, co-production and knowledge sharing emerged. Development professionals became the subjects of ethnographic study themselves ('aidnography'). This included researchers such as Mosse, Lewis and de Sardan (who considered the individuals and institutions, and the gap that emerges during implementation between policies on the one hand and practices and impacts on the ground on the other). Apthorpe (2011, 2011a) coined the word 'Aidland' to describe the traits and characteristics of the development sector (though in a relatively limited view of it). Lewis (2011) discussed both policy translation and life-work history analysis of professionals, including in the NGO sector. He talks about the motivations of non-governmental TA being "political solidarity, humanist compassion, an

exploratory worldview, an interest in trying to escape one's own culture and family, or a sense of religious or humanitarian mission, among others" (Lewis, 2011, p.187). Interestingly these are the same variety of motivations that all of my respondents identified in Article I, not only those working in NGOs. Lewis also discussed the discomfort of his respondents when dealing with problematic ethical issues, such as dealing with their position and role as translators in post-colonial contexts.

Stirrat, Fechter and Eyben focused on the personnel also. For instance, Fechter (2011) describes the diversity of people working in 'aid', in contrast to the stereotype popularised by Hancock's Lords of Poverty (1989) of selfish aid bureaucrats living the high life at the expense of local residents. The work of Stirrat (2008) is significant for my study, as he introduces the stereotypes of 'mercenary, missionary and misfit', with the classic stereotyping of people working in development between these categories, regardless of their often shared values and motivations. To me, these categories are very clear among many of the TA I have met. Mosse (2011) also discussed the messy realities of development work, with development professionals of all types negotiating their place in complex societies and bureaucracies while maintaining their moral-ethical motivations, at the same time as being required to deal with imposed policies and norms.

Riddell (2007) noted that many researchers consider TA in its traditional form (as skills and knowledge gap filling) to be a failure. He qualified this by saying "If the question is whether those who were meant to ensure that aid projects achieved their immediate objectives effectively carried out these tasks, and if those transferring skills, imparting knowledge and providing training did so, then the answer is predominantly 'yes'" (Riddell, 2007, p.203). He considered that the problems lie with the high cost of the international TA, the emphasis on technical skills rather than those as a trainer, and the potential for duplication of activities by different donors. He also mentions that an unforeseen consequence of successful capacity building programs was a brain drain from developing to developed countries. (Riddell, 2007, p.206).

Collins and Evans' (2002), working with science studies[6], described the critiques of technical and scientific decision-making (positivism), yet also critiqued social constructivism and its emphasis on the expertise of the public. They argued there were pros and cons of both types of expertise, and described further categories of 'contributory' or 'interactional' expertise. Being an expert in a professional field is necessary but not sufficient. An expert must also have the ability to translate knowledge, contribute to scientific discussion, make judgements regarding knowledge claims, and interact meaningfully with both scientists and local stakeholders. Recently Byskov (2017) extended that

[6] 'Science studies' or 'science and technology studies' (STS) interrogate the role of science in society in an interdisciplinary manner, including issues such as: the production, representation and reception of scientific knowledge; what makes an expert; and how experts and their authority differentiate them from laypersons. Science studies began in the 1950s with a positivist approach, considering science as a measurable and top-down approach; then moved to become more constructivist in the 1970s, incorporating more social aspects, such as the uses of scientific knowledge (Collins and Evans, 2002).

argument to TA, describing a third wave of development expertise. This is situated between the purely technocratic consideration of TA ('first wave development expertise') and that of purely indigenous knowledge ('second wave development expertise'). He recognises the importance of the knowledge that both experts and community members may have, but emphasises also the need for interactional expertise and the ability to communicate. He argues that neither purely traditional development experts, nor local stakeholders, may fulfil all needs, but may need a 'go-between'. Byskov (2017) argues that it is democratically illegitimate to exclude the local stakeholders from decision-making. It is also pragmatically unwise, as it may endanger the socio-cultural fit and eventual sustainability. However, he also raises the issue that "not all local stakeholders have something valuable to contribute to the development agenda, at least at a (socio-)scientific level" (p.359). He proposes the need for 'mediating experts' of different types (the 'third wave development experts'), who can interact with all parties and translate ideas and activities. Hindman (2014) discussed the commercial cross-cultural training provided to some expatriates in Nepal, and cultural performance. However, this was more related to learning to present one's own culture, and stereotypes of others', within the expatriate world of larger companies. Rather, I have considered important the ability or otherwise of international TA to fit within local settings.

Woolcock (2007) also described what he considered were the key competencies of students of Masters of Development Studies - the skills of 'detectives' (learning to collect, analyse and interpret data), 'translators' (as discussed in my work, the competency to take given ideas and reframe or adapt them for diverse audiences), and 'diplomats' (in order to be able to negotiate, make deals and mediate conflicts). I discussed this further in Article II. To me these are good descriptions of the requirements for a good advisor with a professional and/or technical background, as well as experience in the field and a generalist understanding of problems and potential solutions. It relates to the discussion of translating and brokering that I deal with later in this synthesis. In practice there has been an evolution in the types of TA fielded - from the earlier roles as technical experts (engineers, agricultural advisors) to the now more common hybrid advisors, who combine administrative or economics expertise with generalist project management or evaluation experience. Koch and Weingart (2017) have criticised this as leading to the dumbing down of projects, with TA unable to provide sectoral advice. However, in my experience the reverse was the problem in earlier years, with experts in a narrow field being unable to see the full picture or relate to local conditions. Ideally an advisor will possess both professional expertise and generalist skills and experience.

Scheba and Mustalahti (2015) criticise "the privileged role given by foresters and development experts to professional knowledge and 'expertise' in decentralising forest management" as they consider it is creating a bottleneck for local level initiatives (p.16). They argue in favour of placing

decreased emphasis on complex forest assessments, and they emphasise the role of experts to facilitate communities to develop simpler participatory (and hopefully more sustainable) methods. On the other hand, participatory methods themselves are not a panacea. Stirrat argued that practitioners of participatory methods were not so much giving power to local people and promoting indigenous knowledge, as empowering people to be citizens of the modern state (Stirrat, 2000). Nightingale (2005) also described how in Nepal (or elsewhere) "many development practitioners seek to teach new skills to what are perceived to be backward populations and localities" (p.582). All discuss the overall devaluing of local knowledge in contrast to professional, scientific knowledge (as with Byskov, 2017). These authors also argue that over-technicising of participatory processes may lead to elite capture within communities, as the better educated community members will play a prominent role. Also Rusca et al, 2014 argue that when transferring successful generic models to new environments there is a risk of elite capture of the benefits. On the other hand, some researchers, for instance Merry (2006), consider that there is a role for external actors precisely to avoid this elite capture.

As a precautionary note, I would argue here that there is also a difference depending on the type of project. While I mainly have worked with and studied Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and natural resources projects, which benefit from broad participation and communication, I was also involved with a specific health intervention some years ago. The project involved establishing a national blood transfusion service. This required very precise rules and norms, and was a very hierarchical working environment. This project demonstrated to me that in some projects it is not possible to have a participatory approach, nor to 'learn-by-doing'. In highly technical health projects, mistakes simply can't be made as the result could be one or many deaths.

Some of the criticism of TA has been based on the ethics and behaviours of individuals. For example, Spivak (1988) examined the ethics of researchers and workers, who while intending to represent, aid and empower local people, may be marginalising them. She considered that no external representation is innocent, or even possible, given the unequal power relationships. Kapoor (2004) continued this discussion with a critique of participatory approaches, considering users to be naïve in the expectation that they will resolve power differences. She noted that it is important that all those working in development acknowledge their position, unlearn their prejudices and avoid considering themselves "indispensable, better or culturally superior" (p.642). Crewe and Harrison (1998) described the similarities between colonial attitudes toward local people, and the attitudes of some development workers in modern times. They considered that it can be very difficult, even for the most well-meaning workers, to avoid the assumption that modern Western culture and its technology ('development') are superior to that of the local beneficiaries. Harding (1993) described how the social groups to which we

belong shape what we know and how we communicate. In standpoint theory, the importance of looking from the margins is emphasised, in order to see community relationships clearly, though the questions of who is on the margins and who has power can be debated. In the case of project technical advisors in developing countries, they are often expected to be totally free of bias, to "do the God trick" or adopt a "view from nowhere" (Harding 1993). However, it is natural that advisers are individuals, with varied life and work experiences. Whether they are Finns or Nepalese (from outside of the specific village), their life experiences and standpoints will differ from those of the project beneficiaries.

Many of the problems that TA must deal with are 'wicked problems' as described by Venugopal (2018). While the objective of the project or programme may be relatively clear and bounded, such as provision of safe water and sanitation, there are countless complex political and social influences that make its achievement complex. I argue that the results of technical assistance depend on the individuals' capacities to understand the environment in which they work. In the best of cases, they can combine innovations and technical expertise, and find a good fit with local cultural and political settings. When things do not work out, it might be that they have been arrogant, and insensitive to local challenges. In this case the technical fix may be a good one, but the acceptability and sustainability will be doubtful.

Fechter (2011, 2012a) and Hindman and Fechter (2011) argue that when studying development there is a need for increased focus on development workers' lives, rather than seeing them as marginal in comparison to a focus on traditional issues of sustainability, different modalities of aid, etc. They argue that the development literature often considers the workers themselves invisible, interpreted simply as instruments for policy implementation. This is very much in line with my argument. TA of any kind (including the motivations and attitudes of the persons) and the role it has played, is rarely mentioned when projects, programmes or NGO activities are discussed.

The key determinants of success of TA (referred to here as TC) were described by the OECD (from a summary of unpublished documents of the multilateral banks) to include the degree of:

- Engagement by the recipient in terms of financial participation, detailed and continuing dialogue in project implementation, and shared understanding of project goals.
- Technical competence of experts. (By contrast, bilateral evaluations have often found that ability to adjust to the local customs and working environment may be more important than skill level).
- Professional supervision by the extending agency, including accompanying experts on planning missions and limiting staff turn-over so that the same case officer follows all phases of a project. (OECD, 2006, p. 119).

The OECD also noted that in a "donor-driven provision of experts in programmes where commercial or political interests play a significant role…

The success of TC depends on subtle interactions of qualitative factors such as individual competences, organisational capacity and institutional performance." (OECD, 2006, p. 119).

Koponen et al (2012) reported the importance of the human factor, in combination with good structures. "The right people in the right place, or the wrong people in the wrong place, can thus make quite a difference. Nonetheless, as modern social theory teaches us, while social and political processes and structures are composed of human, and basically individual, actions, human individuals can only act within those processes, and within the limits and frameworks of the available structures." (p.74-75). I argue both these cases. Both individuals and organisations are important for development cooperation.

There are many examples where technical cooperation does not achieve the expectations of one or both sides. This may be due to the project design, such as placing experts in advisory roles with recipient institutions who are not interested in receiving advice, or when the assignment is located in a capital city far from the grassroots implementation. In these circumstances the advisor can't be involved in brokering and bricolage, and the two-way discourse of governance will not function. The excessively bureaucratic system of tendering means the TA requirements are defined in advance for the assignment or project. If insufficient time is available for the project preparation, with limited time in the field for the design experts, or the 'correct' stakeholders are not consulted, the project design and TA specifications may not accurately represent the needs. Who are 'correct' is a point of contention - national government stakeholders may argue for TA inputs based in the capital; while some members of participating communities might prefer to have TA at local level.

Alternatively, it could be that the wrong person has been selected for the job. The tendering and contracting processes do not always result in the right advisor being selected. The personality of the individual is an important determinant of whether they will fit into the local environment and be able to do their job. This is clearly seen in this dissertation (particularly Articles I,II, III, IV and V). The impact of individuals in many roles are important, not only the technical advisors, but also including the staff of the donor and embassy, the NGO or consulting company home office, the national and local government staff in partner countries and the local participants themselves.

No doubt there are power imbalances at each level. The donor government has the money, though in the case of my Nepal case studies, a considerable part of the implementation budget comes from the Nepalese government, local governments and communities. Recipients can also have power. Depending on the urgency of the donor to achieve an outcome, recipient government staff can exert power by slowing progress, and community actors can interfere with the best laid plans. This demonstrates the points raised by Cleaver and Whaley (2018) on bricolage and critical institutionalism. They argue that at communities cannot be expected to move in a path-dependent manner toward

a pre-determined goal. Institutions partially elude design, and there is a dynamic web of relationships, institutions and practices, which the TA must always consider and work with.

3.3 THE MAJOR APPROACHES AND THEMES REGARDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Below I expand on some of the big themes that emerged in my research. They include habitus, altruism and motivations, gender equality, social inclusion and human rights, brokerage of ideas, and principal-agent theory.

3.3.1 MOTIVATIONS OF TA AND DOING GOOD

When considering why people would want to work in development cooperation and why development cooperation is undertaken in general by donors, I explored gift theory and altruism. Altruism is generally understood to be the disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others. It is usually considered the opposite extreme of selfishness. However, in practice they are not binary concepts, but a continuum.

Silk (2004) looked at gift theory in development. He considered that there are two basic forms of the gift relationship. 1. Purely altruistic; 2. fully reciprocal and obligatory within the framework of institutions, values and social forces within specific relationships of politics and power. The first defines a purely altruistic action, the abstract free human gift which is not reciprocated in any respect. The classic example is the action of a blood donor, who receives nothing in return. Though even in that case, the donor is not demonstrating totally disinterested, spontaneous altruism. She/he still feel self-satisfied at making their gift, and also know that should the tables be turned one day, she/he will benefit from a donation. This leans then towards the second definition of the gift relationship. “Gift Theory suggests that, however benign the motivation, and however generous the terms of aid, asymmetry between donor and recipient will not only be perpetuated but deepened unless appropriate actors organize to build movements and institutions that structure such gift relationships as equal and reciprocal” (Silk, 2004, p.235). Silk stresses that positionality is important and “‘moral geographies’, with their emphasis on philanthropy and guilt-motivated giving, are not only inadequate but reinforce divisions between North and South, remaining hampered by binary divisions in terms of donor–recipient, class, race and inclusion/exclusion” (Silk, 2004, p.245).

Wants, interests, and paternalism are all potentially involved in altruism (Kitcher, 2012). The latter involves what the donor perceives as the interests of the recipient. In the case of a mother and child (for instance, insisting that

a child takes medicine), Kitcher argues that most would accept this as reasonable. However, the true interests of the recipients are not always clear in development aid, especially when those making the decisions, even on the recipient side, are usually far from the actual site of action. In the case studies in Nepal, for example, the bilateral donor and recipient governments are making a decision on the interests and needs of community members.

Mawdsley (2011) turned a critical eye to gift theory – first when considering traditional OECD/DAC donors and then regarding the new southern donors. She noted the symbolic properties of foreign aid in postcolonial relationships and criticises the "fiction of unconditional, un-obligated giving" (p.260). She discusses that some consider grant aid (as compared to loans) to be equivalent to a gift, as on the surface it does not need to be reciprocated. Yet she argues that in practice, it establishes uneven power relationships, leading to aid dependency, and often to the expectation that the recipient country will happily support the economic and political goals of the donor. Eyben (2006) also looked critically at gift theory in aid, noting that it is both interested and disinterested. If a gift is given in the understanding that it will be reciprocated, then giving aid (which the recipient country cannot match) reinforces the political dominance of the donor. She argued that by pooling aid, the power imbalance is diminished and positive relationships could be built. She also defined the different representations of a gift in the aid sector – as a neo-liberal contract, with an expectation of a return or with future aid being conditional on performance; or an entitlement (in rights-based discourses). A gift can combine overtones of solidarity and morality, with unequal power relationships. (Eyben, 2005, p.119) I would argue that aid can be all of these things at the same time.

Olesen and Pedersen also considered altruism in development cooperation, in their review of Danish development aid (2010). They argue that altruism does provide one of the justifications for giving aid, but with the rider that it is not naïve altruism. Altruism is often seen in public perceptions as the prime mover for aid, but it is generally combined with other motives (eg. economic or political) to a varying degree, depending on the country and modality. They also note that altruism can be linked to a means-and-ends argument. If altruism as a motivation for public policy is most highly morally valued, the outcome is of lesser importance. But if the outcome – in this case, poverty reduction and other objectives – is the main concern, then the use of self-interested providers might be important, rather than only altruistic impulses. This is relevant to the role of the private sector in development.

If development cooperation were a purely altruistic gift, it would consist of purely a financial transfer via budget support. Yet donors are rarely prepared to give funding without strings attached.

Governments may give aid for many reasons beyond the purely moral. Riddell described the reasons as:

> "(1) to help address emergency needs; (2) to assist recipients achieve their development (growth and poverty-reducing) goals; (3) to show

> solidarity; (4) to further their own national political and strategic interests; (5) to help promote donor-country commercial interests; (6) because of historical ties;... (7) the contribution that aid funds can make to providing and strengthening global public goods, and reducing the ill effects of global evils; ... (8) some donors have started more explicitly to base aid-giving decisions on the human rights records of recipient governments, in particular by reducing or halting completely the flow of aid to countries whose record on basic human rights they assess as seriously deficient. The vast majority of donors have allocated aid on the basis of a mix of these different factors, the particular mix differing, often sharply, between donors and over different time periods." (Riddell, 2007, p. 91-92).

He then goes on to argue that by contrast, "practically all individuals, companies and foundations who give voluntarily to support the work of humanitarian and development charities do so because of some sense of responsibility or duty to help people suffering and in need." (Riddell, 2007, p.120)

Many mainstream economists have argued, via the concept of utilitarianism, that (moral) life should be guided by the objective of trying to achieve the maximum happiness and satisfaction for all (or for the greatest number of people)(for instance, Singer, 2004). Riddell argues that utilitarian arguments can be seen in the increasing emphasis placed on the results and impact of aid interventions, as this would support the idea of channelling aid to those countries who use it well. However, others consider that this is inadequate as a concept as gives no particular value to human rights or other moral considerations (Riddell, 2007, p.130).

UNDP (2006) looked at motivations and incentives of both individuals and organisations in development. It defined motivation as a critical dimension of capacity, defined as "the ability of people, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives". The authors described incentives as "external measures that are designed and established to influence motivation and behaviour of individuals, groups or organizations. Incentive systems or structures are combinations of several more or less coherent incentives" (UNDP, 2006, p.5). These overlapping motivational factors were broken down to societal/enabling environment (such as rule of law, culture); organisational (such as history, mission, culture, incentive structure); and individual (intrinsic motivations and morals). In Articles I, II and III, these factors were all important in motivating both individuals and companies to work in development. Incentive systems are present in all organisations, including donors, consulting companies and local governments, whether based on perception or reality. They might include the obvious incentives of salary, bonuses and opportunities for status and travel; but also moral reward, a so-called 'public service motivation'. (UNDP, 2006, p.11). "In a workplace context, belief in the "mission"—the social purpose—of the organization can be an important element in "moral" motivation (Paul and

Robinson, 2005, p.19). Francois describes agents motivated by public service motivation (PSM) as pure altruists. In my viewpoint this is perhaps a little exaggerated! He continues: "This is different from an action-oriented motivation such as a 'warm-glow', under which agents experience an increase in utility just by performing certain actions. With PSM, the nature of the actions performed is irrelevant, all that matters is the effect of the actions" (Francois, 2000, p. 278). He notes that public service motivation is strong in volunteers, but is also possible in private sector companies. This has links to principal-agent theory, discussed later.

Fechter (2016) has also discussed morality in relation to aid workers themselves, proposing the concept of 'moral labour' as a driver and integral part of their work. It is separate from both material and immaterial outcomes, being focussed more on the process. She notes that part of the challenge is that aid work is perpetually striving to achieve the impossible. Improvements tend to be slow and may not come as a direct result of the work. Despite being committed to their 'mission', workers may also be confronted with difficult situations and ethical dilemmas. The moral labour also includes the self-reflection and self-criticism that many TA indulge in, both individually and in groups. This sets them apart from many professionals in other sectors or in their home country.

> "In the context of aid as an enduring concern of both state and individual actors, recognising the performance of moral labour as a significant dimension of aid work may indicate that something exists within, and to some extent fills the persistent gap between its stated aims and its evident achievements." (Fechter 2016, p.241)

Questions of altruism versus self-interest arise both in the consideration of individual motivations; and in those of companies working in development or donors themselves. Authors such as Shutt (2012), Eriksson Baaz (2005), Stirrat (2008), de Jong (2011) and Fechter (2011, 2012b) have all considered the varied motivations of individuals. de Jong (2011) argued that there is a false binary if one assumes that more altruism means less selfishness. While there has been a tendency to assume that profit is the main motivation for individuals and companies, Gibson et al (2005) noted that profit is only one motivation, and often not the most significant, while developing meaningful partnerships, and contributing to well-being and poverty reduction in developing countries are important drivers. In Article II, I noted similar research on motivations of teachers (Watt and Richardson, 2008). Watt and Richardson described the drivers to be: intrinsic value; social utility value of the work; and extrinsic or attainment value, meaning the subjective importance of doing well on the task, in terms of social status, morale and salary. Altruism can be intrinsic, or it could be an ideology that aid workers feel they should subscribe to.

In the UK media there has been considerable criticism of aid work, particularly criticising the salaries of staff (for instance, in The Guardian, and Provost 2016).

> 'The attacks touch on a pretty profound identity crisis for anyone working in aid. Is it a career or a vocation? People working for charities are not saints, but really pretty normal, mainly middle-class types. They have partners, kids, many drive cars. We go on holiday (I know, shocking isn't it?). We worry about getting old, pensions, all that stuff. There is the odd ascetic Mother Teresa type … but by and large we don't live in convents/monasteries – which means mortgages. But it's also a vocation, something that inspires and excites and makes you feel very lucky' (Duncan Green of Oxfam, 2013).

These could equally be the words of NGO or consulting company staff in Finland or TA in projects. We are all balancing this dilemma, working on poverty reduction while earning a salary from it. Periodically this issue also arises in Finnish media, with criticism of all actors working in the aid industry. Are these criticisms fair? Is it ethical to make money from development? Beyond volunteers (who can't volunteer forever), everyone working in development earns a salary, from the researchers, NGOs and government staff to the consulting companies and multilateral staff. Advisors in the field do receive a high fee, but they spend long hours far from home, and risk disrupted family lives, uncertain contracts and potential danger.

Perhaps the biggest problem ethically within Aidland is the proximity of the poverty. Earning well (or seeing others earn well) while exposed to poverty literally on your doorstep feels more uncomfortable than when it is more of a theoretical concept in another country. I still remember coming from eating in a decent restaurant in the 1980s in Nicaragua and feeling shocked to see beggars outside. A friend commented that I would always be faced by this unease, as of course, the poor are always there, even if you don't see them.

As noted earlier, development cooperation has a dual nature, the developmentalist side and the instrumentalities, with many making their living from the development industry, politics and discourses. In most of the articles of my study, I investigated the motivations of respondents, the majority of whom make their living from development. None identified a purely altruistic motivation. Instead, they placed themselves on a spectrum of motivations, including interest in travel, improving the lives of others, career development and profit. This was the case for both Finnish and Nepali respondents. While the salaries were important, they were often living away from family and friends in stressful roles, therefore other motivations must also have been important. Clearly a good salary and career path could be a motivating factor, yet Stirrat (2008) notes that a comparison to the salary levels paid in western countries is rarely made. In the case of the Nepalese working at community level, interviewed and surveyed in Articles IV and V, several raised the importance of being associated with a project and company with a good reputation. When considering the motivations of consulting companies, respondents noted that while profit is important for the viability of the company, the waning profitability of development work makes this a

poor investment. Other motivations must exist. This is discussed further in chapter 3.3.4.

In development ethics, important questions include: "What is good or 'real' development? What is the good life which development policy should seek to facilitate, what really are benefits? How are benefits and costs to be shared, within the present generation and between generations? Who decides and how? What rights of individuals should be respected and guaranteed?" (Gasper, 2012, p.120). These questions are at the basis of the work of all actors in the chain of development. I discuss these in further chapters and in the articles themselves.

3.3.2 GENDER EQUALITY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS, AND FINNISH VALUE ADDED

Significant in development cooperation, and a particular focus in my research, are the critical cross-cutting objectives of gender equality, social inclusion and human rights. These are now some of the key values that most DAC donors (especially Nordics) state must be included in projects. The technical advisors play a key role in translating them into local conditions. Gender is also an issue with regard to the individuals working in development themselves. To a varying extent, the Finnish development policies have also promoted Finnish Added Value (or value added) as part of cross-cutting objectives that should be considered in development.

The discourse in this topic has moved from Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD), and more recently to Gender Equality or Equity (Razavi and Miller, 1995; Reeves and Baden, 2000). In one of my first jobs in a developing country, an experienced consultant advised me that when writing a project proposal I must not "forget the WID factor"! WID emerged in the 1970s from a liberal feminist perspective and called for more attention to women in development policy and practice, with inclusion in the development process (such as via employment and economic opportunities). It was argued that development activities at the time were ignoring women, and potentially leading to a deterioration in the position of women (Razavi and Miller, 1995). However, practitioners became frustrated with the WID approach, as it ignored the power differentials between women and men. Rather than focusing only on women's problems, the GAD approach emerged, focusing on the socially constructed (rather than purely biological) differences between men and women. It emphasised the need to challenge existing power dynamics, gender roles and relations (Reeves and Baden, 2000). There was also a push to consider men and masculinity (Cornwall, 2000). The issue is now considered more broadly than just 'women' by donors, researchers and practitioners (though it can be seen in practice that at times the terms 'women' and 'gender' are mixed). It encompasses intersectionality with topics such as race, ethnicity, caste, religion and sexual preference or identity. Østebø (2015) notes that gender equality is promoted by most donors or NGOs and is

frequently presented as a 'universal norm'. Yet she argues that there is not necessarily a shared common understanding. She argues that gender equality is a contested concept, which can be translated and transformed in diverse ways by actors at all levels, looking for a fit with local values. Acceptance of the need to find a locally appropriate treatment of gender, can provide space for exploring alternative visions of gender equality. However, it also runs the risk of watering down gender concepts too far.

In higher level projects and programs it is often difficult to ensure nuanced and context-specific understandings of women's empowerment. Even organisations working specifically on gender issues internationally or from the capital, miss the everyday interactions and opportunities to act. This is where both locally-based NGOs and TA in projects have more chance to influence both women's control over resources, and efforts to increase their agency, both within the household and community (Leder et al, 2017).

The quest for gender equality has been an element of Finnish development policy for many years. In practice it has sometimes been treated very simply. For instance, it can take the form of counting numbers of women in an activity, rather than considering qualitative questions leading to true change. However, it has also been addressed systematically at high level, via bilateral consultations and informal discussions of cross-cutting issues (MFA 2008). Gender equality has also been part of policies and strategies of the partner governments, for instance the Nepalese Government. Gender is a social construct, and the views vary widely between different stakeholders. "Gender is thus part of the world we live in but it also a way of understanding the world…. Gender was, and always is, entangled with and never separate from other forms of social difference" (Arora-Jonsson, 2013, p.5).

Nepal demonstrates this social construct of gender clearly, with its ties to social roles, responsibilities and positioning. Unlike a genetic definition of sex, gender is not immutable, while sex – at least in a chromosomal sense, will not change. A Brahmin woman is normally considered socially higher and more powerful than a Dalit man in Nepalese society, yet when she is menstruating she becomes untouchable. A Brahmin woman in rural Nepal once told me that "Hindu religion holds that if a woman touches water on the first day of her menstruation, she is like a dog; and on the second day if she touches it, she will be like a washer-woman caste" (personal communication). While Brahmins are typically the most advantaged caste in society, menstrual taboos affect them most seriously, while they are a less significant issue for ethnic minorities (Janajatis) and Dalits.

Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) focus on participation and inclusion of all potential individuals in developing their community or society. The Government of Nepal introduced policies and quotas regarding gender and social inclusion, however they have meagre resources. The donor support has been valuable in addressing issues of rights and GESI. The Finnish water activities in Nepal developed a specific gender focus during the 1990s, and issues of social inclusion of different castes and ethnicities were gradually

introduced to the work. These issues emerged with the World Bank and the UK Department for International Development (DfID) carried out the Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment from 2002-2005 (World Bank, 2006). This was one of the first studies to focus on other issues of social exclusion and inclusion beyond gender in Nepal. In particular, it looked at the barriers to inclusion faced by Dalits and ethnic minorities (Ausland and Haug, 2008). Exclusion due to menstruation was an issue that really only emerged during the first phase of one of my case study projects, the Rural Village Water Resources Management Project in Nepal (RVWRMP), when a Gender and Social Discrimination Study was commissioned by the project (Abhiyan, 2009). The study tried to identify the practices, values and norms used to justify and rationalise discriminatory practices. This was then taken up as an important issue in the subsequent phases, and now throughout Nepal. However, menstruation taboos and related discriminatory behaviours are not easy to change, and local cultural traditions can overpower externally imposed behavioural changes proposed by the project TA (Haapala and White, 2015). The setting of the two case study projects is a highly complex environment. Leder reviewed literature and described the multi-faceted nature of empowerment - empowerment in resources, agency and achievements; and note the importance of distinguishing between "power within", "power with" and "power to". She argued that it cannot be assumed that economic empowerment or participation in decision-making processes will automatically empower women. There may be more unseen conflicts and power relationships at individual, household and community level that inhibit change (Leder, 2016).

The Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) has gradually emerged as an important change in the focus of the projects' work. It was discussed in the MFA's 2004 Development Policy, but only became more evident as a development issue in 2012. The earlier phases of the Finnish water projects applied a needs-based approach, which states there is a responsibility of the global community to support particular individuals (by extension, those who cannot help themselves). The HRBA to development assists the poor or marginalised to assert their own rights to existing resources, and to share these more equally. This has required a change of planning and attitudes by project staff. Rights always signify responsibilities and obligations, whereas needs do not. HRBAs are based on international legal conventions, such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966), and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (*1966). It also relies on national legislation, including the recently finalised Nepali Constitution (2016) in my case studies. In 2010 the UN agreed to the Right to Water and Sanitation (A/64/292). The declaration was signed by Nepal, along with Finland and many, though not all countries. These conventions and laws (along with the increasing focus on human rights within the Finnish development policies) provided a framework for the water projects to incorporate a HRBA to the

GESI Strategy and Action Plan (2015), which is now applied to both RWSSP-WN and RVWRMP. The HRBA also recognises that perfect achievement of rights will not be immediate. Limits on available funding, geographic barriers and probably most importantly, power inequities, mean that in practice, HRBA is a work in progress. Governments should plan for progressive achievement of rights (Kirkemann Boesen and Martin, 2007). The water projects have adjusted their plans with HRBA in mind, and trained the staff and the local authorities (naturally it is difficult to say how well the message has been absorbed, and whether they will continue along this line after the project ends). The national and local governments are the legal 'duty bearers', with the responsibility to implement the Right to Water and Sanitation (amongst other rights), though they are often not aware of this responsibility. As the Government of Nepal has signed up to these rights, this agenda is not just externally imposed from Finland, but is part of the Nepali law. Naturally, it can be argued that in international politics there are pressures and varying motivations for countries to participate in international conventions. However, the acceptance of the right of all citizens to enjoy access to clean water and sanitation is surely a noble agenda. This is discussed further in Articles IV and V. de Albuquerque and Roaf (2013) discussed also the popular misconception that if water is a right, then it should be free. They note that, as with other human rights, such as the rights to food or health, or access to justice, there is no obligation on the part of a government to provide water and sanitation services for free. Naturally, there is a cost to water provision – the expectation is that the state will subsidise the provision for low income households.

GESI and HRBA are a particular focus of Articles IV, V, VI and VII. Gender equality, social inclusion and respect for human rights are some of the values that international and national TA are translating to a local setting, and building local capabilities to handle. Article VI (a book chapter) specifically describes the challenges of operationalising gender and human rights issues. For instance, in Article V, we note that local community level practices often don't reflect the national laws and policies, and serious discrimination based on gender or caste is evident. The TA and local facilitators then need to introduce these laws and policies, and facilitate questioning of traditional norms in the community, yet without losing the trust of the community or local leadership. They use formal training or informal discussions and learning-by-doing for this purpose (including using everyday interactions, for instance over a cup of tea). However, often this isn't enough and the community traditions and informal institutional hegemony prevails. Haapala and White (2015) found that menstruating women in remote communities of Nepal have insufficient individual agency to withstand societal taboos, despite the efforts of the project TA to support them.

Finnish Added Value is a complex concept without a clear definition. It has been used to justify the role of Finnish funding and TA in development, particularly by some Finnish political leaders. While it only explicitly entered

the MFA's Development Policy in 2004, it was a driver of development aid for decades earlier, reflecting both developmentalist and instrumentalist aims. Sometimes it was considered to refer to specific sectors where Finns might have considerable expertise, such as forestry or rural water supply. Others considered it to mean the promotion of Finnish values and patterns of behaviour based on them. Still others talked of Finnish history and lessons learned in its own development, or for instance, finding commonality with small countries, or those with large, threatening neighbours. In the 2007 Development Policy, the concept became more instrumentalist, focusing more on the role of Finnish expertise and businesses.

Finnish identity could also be seen in the choices made by the Finnish MFA, and the way it acts and is treated. As noted earlier, Finland usually acts as a member of the Nordic bloc. It often shares embassy space with Sweden, and holds similar policy positions. As a small country, with a small aid budget, it has less power in bilateral discussions. However, it has the advantage of no (or extremely limited) colonial baggage. This probably means it is seen differently by local stakeholders than, for instance, the British government or TA.

By 2019, the importance of Finnish Added Value has again declined, though in my research I found that Finnish experts and outsiders did have a mental vision of the concept of Finnish values and behaviours.

In their study of Finnish Value Added for the MFA in 2012, Koponen et al developed a working understanding:

> "the Finnish value added (FVA) has been understood as stemming from something more or less peculiarly Finnish, be it understood as technology, expertise, skills, attitudes, values, patterns of behaviour, etc." They took this further to mean "a contribution by the Finns that stems less from any essential 'Finnishness', in whatever way that is defined, than from the way individual Finns, with their collective and individual expertise and skills and values, work in a certain context, that is, how they make resources available and enter into differing constellations with the partners and other donors." (p.25)

I am not originally Finnish (and there are fewer and fewer Finnish technical advisors), but I share with many of my respondents a warm and fuzzy vision of Finnish Values. Perhaps this is the 'acquired trait' that Koponen et al (2012) refer to. I support the application of Finnish Values in projects I work with. When my Finnish respondents were asked what Finnish Added Value meant, they typically referred to transparency, hard work, reliability, gender equality, flat hierarchy, participation, respect for rights and equal treatment for all. That is not to say that all Finnish TA automatically embody these values. I have witnessed Finns in all modalities who, in my opinion, are secretive, lazy, misogynist, love hierarchy and treat staff poorly – but it is rare. On the other hand, I have seen these negative traits in others of all nationalities.

Projects make a value statement via their activities. If clear values and aims are identified, this can be a way to bind together the TA and stakeholders in a common journey. However, it can be questioned whether it is appropriate to

bring in external values, and to ask whose values are more important? Nussbaum (2003) argued that some freedoms are too important to leave to local cultural traditions, and therefore it is justifiable for others to intervene to support some basic capabilities or rights. Certainly they need translation to local settings, finding a pragmatic fit (for instance, the case study projects refrain from intervening on menstrual taboos in religious observance, such as attending temple, even though this could be considered an infringement of gender equality). This is addressed in Articles III, IV and V in particular. Koponen et al (2012) concluded that "the work of Finnish aid in the water supply and sanitation sector in Nepal was based more on a set of values than other considerations." (p.71). In addition, in my interviews with Finnish Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) in multilateral organisations (White et al, 2011), it was clear that these 'traits' and values of Finnishness (such as being hard working, reliable and not indulging in office gossip) were appreciated by co-workers and managers. Finnish JPOs were considered good for getting the job done, but these traits were not necessarily conducive for retention within multilateral organisations, with quite different cultures.

Some have also argued that the Finnish model of forestry (a supposed technical Finnish added value) could be problematic, as it was very technical and was promoted heavily (and is now criticised in some quarters). It is commonly considered to be of high quality, however its transferability is now questioned. On the other hand, the Finnish interventions in the water sector in recent years were more neutral, becoming less technical and more focused on social aspects (Koponen, 2011).

Gender with respect to people working in Technical Assistance is another interesting issue, where striking changes can be seen. In earlier decades of development cooperation, the majority of personnel were men, however this is changing. For instance, the evaluation of the Finnish JPO programme found that the proportions of Finnish JPOs had swung strongly towards women. The JPO cadre from the 1980s consisted mainly of men. By the decade 2000-2010, it was dominated by women). Many reasons for this change in gender balance were discussed, including the move from more technical JPO postings to more in the social sector; the perception of development work being a 'caring role', with limited financial and career prospects; and a recruitment process that favoured women. However, this wasn't reflected in the retention of JPOs, nor in the recruitment of Finnish diplomats. (White et al, 2011).

I have been privileged to have a supportive family, which supported me to travel and work internationally, even though I had children. In developing countries, I have often been treated as an honorary man, as I don't fit the stereotypes or expected gender roles of women in that society. This was also reported by many Finnish female respondents. Yet all female advisors, both international and local, face greater barriers in international development cooperation. Travel and staying away from home (particularly for those with children) are sources of stress, as is the gendered social and workplace status (Gritti, 2015). In many developing countries it has been culturally problematic

for women to travel and stay away from home. For that reason, there have traditionally been much fewer women in development cooperation until the last couple of decades (noted in Article I; and in White et al, 2011). Anecdotally it is observed that those women who hold high level posts in donor agencies or the UN often are often single. In the case study projects in Nepal it has proved very difficult to recruit local women advisors who are able or prepared to travel to the field. Those who do comment themselves on their unusual status (Regmi and Fawcett, 1999; Udas and Zwarteveen, 2010; and discussed further in Articles IV and V).

3.3.3 BROKERING, TRANSLATION AND BRICOLAGE

Development policies present an ideal situation, but the link between policy and practice is often unclear. In practice technical advisors act as go-betweens in the implementation chain, linking policy, resources and rules from above, with field experiences, problem-solving and institutional-memory. This is a significant part of my study, looking at the implementation chain, including the 'Development Cooperation Octangle' and the position of the individuals in this (Ostrom et al, 2001; Gibson et al, 2005, discussed in chapter 3.3.4). In my articles I use the terms 'brokering', 'translating' and 'facilitating bricolage'. They convey a similar idea, with some difference of emphasis (discussed further below). To my mind, brokering is focused more on the person, the go-between, who is aiming to find a middle ground between diverging interests and interpretations; while translation is focused more on the activity and result of taking polices, guidelines (and even human or inanimate inputs to a project) from one setting to another (as in the interpretation of Mosse and Lewis, 2006). Brokers and translators can be the same person. Figure 1 demonstrates my understanding of the differences between the three, based on the literature discussed below.

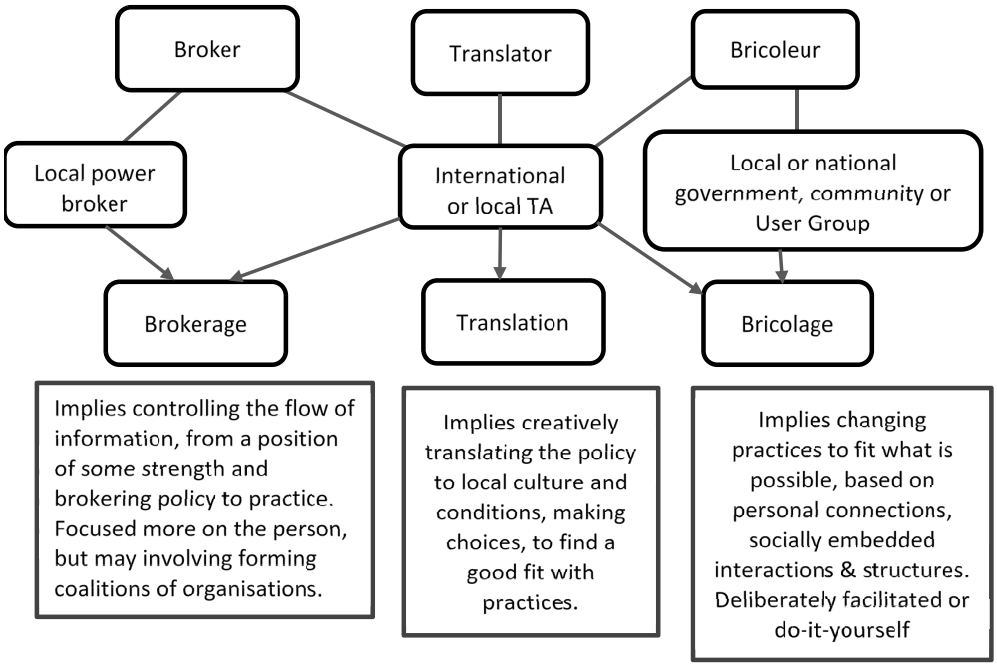

Figure 1. Brokerage, Translation and Bricolage

Source: Author

Bierschenk et al (2002) described brokers in the sense of local community members, who have at least some contacts with development projects, as well as capacities gained through education or travel outside of their community "providing him with the know-how, appropriate jargon and behaviour which enable him to adjust to partly heterogeneous cultures, and which can be reinvested or recycled in brokerage…the broker thus learns how to change roles, or how to go from one 'universe' to another." (p.21). It is also critical very important that the broker masters the local 'language' (both linguistic and cultural) and that of development-speak. Brokers (and the act of brokerage) take the go-between role, controlling what resources will flow to whom. Brokers may be local development brokers, as described by Bierschenk, such as civil servants, local government, religious or political leaders. They are described on the left hand side of the diagram above, as local power brokers.

Brokers can also be the international or local TA that I am mainly focused on (the central box). This different interpretation has been used by Mosse, Lewis, and others. For instance, Mosse refers to "skilled brokers (managers, consultants, fieldworkers, community leaders…) who read the meaning of a project into the different institutional languages of its stakeholder supporters" (Mosse, 2005, p.9). I am mainly dealing with the role of TA, but recognise the brokerage roles of others as well. den Heyer and Johnson (2019) describe project documents, policies and agreements being constructed and deconstructed as they pass through the brokers and undergo strategic

translations. The brokers apply their own biases and relationship to adapt the policies as they filter to the grassroots.

My use of the term 'translation' overlaps somewhat with brokering, as described above. I consider that translation is a change process concerning policies and ideas, particularly with respect to intentional or unintentional modifications. Wæraas and Nielsen state that domain-specific knowledge cannot move effectively from one domain to the other without some sort of shared understanding of what the knowledge means in the recipient context. Domain-specific knowledge thus requires brokers or translators who can operate in both cultures (Wæraas and Nielsen, 2015). Stone (2012) looked at the history of policy diffusion, transfer, convergence and translation. In the earlier diffusion studies, it was assumed that good policy was contagious. Yet Stone notes that in quite different settings (such as those encountered in development aid) there can be divergence from linear messaging of the original meaning of the policy, moving to translation – the policy isn't 'cryogenically preserved', but instead is mutated via the translation process (Stone, 2012, p,489). Translation of a policy requires actions by both the translator and the 'recipient', who decide when and what to accept or resist. It can't be assumed that simply because a policy is proffered, or even if it is scientifically proven to be valuable (for instance with policy regarding tobacco and smoking), will it be successfully picked up in another context. Knowledge transfer is simpler than policy transfer.

Freeman (2009) discusses translation in a range of sectors. He argues that when translating knowledge or policy from one setting to another, conscious choices must be made. The translators must choose between better and worse alternatives, and in order to do a good job, they must know who it is destined for. In other words, this is a political process, rather than a merely technical one. He notes that "meaning can be lost in translation but also created by it" (Freeman, 2009, p. 432). Interestingly he also argues that the translator themselves is often ignored (much as with the TA that I deal with).

Dunlop and Radaelli (2013) described the literature on policy learning as being split between: reflexive learning, learning through bargaining, epistemic learning, and learning in the shadow of hierarchy. All of these can be applicable in different settings within development. Reflexive learning is defined as policy development in participatory settings, where there is room to change. In learning through bargaining, they consider that there is a heavy involvement of bureaucrats and political actors. For epistemic learning, this focuses on technical policy based on shared knowledge between 'experts', and they question whether rationality, science and experts bring about change in public policy, and if so, by what methods? Learning and policy development in the shadow of hierarchy is defined as happening in a setting with a strong top-down pressure and limited room for flexibility (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2013, pp. 603-4).

Both international and local TA (in projects, and in long term volunteering and NGO assignments) take technical and professional knowledge, project

management norms, and values such as GESI and HRBA, good governance and transparency into local implementation. In addition, brokerage involves innovation and adaptation of the ideas locally and feeding them back up to the higher levels for policy and strategy improvement. In fact, all the actors in the implementation chain - donor ministry and embassy, consulting company, international and national TA, community level facilitators and even community – play a dual role. In Articles IV and V we describe how TA relate to guidance and orders from above, while feeding back empirical learning to the policy level. At the same time, they provide facilitation (ensuring all actors get a chance to participate), guidance and control to those below them, while learning from experience and receiving feedback from below. In this process, theoretical constructs or models are made real through practice, and are adapted to suit the local situation. This reflects Long's argument for deconstructing planned interventions, which he argued were socially constructed and negotiated processes between the various levels of participants, rather than the implementation of a pre-determined plan. He also argued that implementation was not only top-down, but that adaptions could come from below. Thus, the way an intervention played out was dependent on the agency, knowledge and power of the participants, and their relationships (Long, 1992).

Some researchers have described the role of TA in brokering, or perhaps better said, translating policy to practice - or even of the impossibility of this (eg. Mosse, 2005; Olivier de Sardan, 2005, 2015; Gibson et al, 2005; Mosse & Lewis, 2006; Mosse, 2011; Mayer, 2017). Mosse (2005), for instance, states that "policy models do not and cannot shape actual practice in the way that they claim. They are ignored, resisted, 'consumed', or tactically used in ways that make them irrelevant in the face of more urgent relational demands" (p. 16). de Sardan (2005) states "a development agent cannot play the role of spokesperson for technical-scientific knowledge without also assuming a role as a mediator. He or she cannot transmit without first translating, and the 'quality' of the 'translation' will depend on the degree of the development agent's mastery of both languages." (p.27) He refers here to translation between languages, but of course he also means a more complex cultural translation. He also notes that the agent must manage competing interests – their own, their institution, and the local actors – and potential power struggles. It is the brokering to local settings and needs, via the agency of various development actors, which puts the policy into practice. Behrends et al (2014) consider how ideas, knowledge or techniques come to a new setting. "Translating models means that they travel by being conveyed, carried, picked up, called for and interpreted by various actors or – as we will call them – mediators." (Behrends et al, 2014, p.2). As discussed earlier, it is this communication or translation role between technical and professional experts, and local knowledge holders (or "second wave development expertise") that Byskov (2017) and den Heyer and Johnson (2019) consider critical (as do I).

It is argued by some that this less controlled space for translating policy to practice is problematic, as the policy is altered beyond the control of its authors (for instance by Mosse, 2005). This is probably particularly problematic for development loans. Bazbauers (2019) has described the way in which the World Bank "uses TA to "stack the deck" in its favour" (p. 652) with regard identifying and working with sympathetic actors for policy translation. He considers that policy may either be coercive (thanks to conditional and prescriptive loans), or the TA may be used to ensure that the policy is made to sound acceptable to local stakeholders – in other words, limiting the true transformation, and simply changing the presentation. From my experience it appears that grants may be more flexible (and NGO funding certainly is). For grants, it is this fitting to local needs that makes it more likely to have local ownership, and be functional and sustainable. Policy developed in the donor HQ or even national ministry cannot be expected to fit all situations.

The third concept I discuss here is bricolage. Institutional bricolage describes the way that local level institutions emerge as a combination of socially embedded practices and formal structures – patching together guidelines and formal project structures, with practical adaptations (Cleaver 2012). This can be conscious or non-conscious, adapting processes and institutional arrangements to respond to the challenges and needs of daily life and work (Cleaver and de Koning, 2015). The role of technical development cooperation has changed considerably over the years, moving from the idea of top-down knowledge and technical transfer, to capacity building, and now to translation and facilitating local level bricolage (Wilson, 2007). This can be seen in the change in water cooperation in Nepal and elsewhere, from the early days of construction by the project team themselves (during the first phase of the 'Lumbini' project), to community-based management now (in my case study projects). Earlier, with a positivist viewpoint, it was assumed that a model from Finland or elsewhere could be replicated in another country. Scientific and technical solutions were considered value-free and transferable. However the model cannot be assumed to operate in the same way within a different social setting and 'rationality'. Mosse notes that institutions or technologies (national or local) fashioned by expert techniques come to be re-embedded in relations of power that alter their functionality, and that this translation may have unanticipated or even perverse effects. (Mosse, 2011, p.5).

It is true that in higher level projects with aims of institutional development, and particularly in fragile states, there may be more significant clashes, with winners and losers. Yanguas (2018) noted that "most aid projects are institutional interventions seeking to uproot pervasive informal institutions such as clientelism and exclusion" (p.204). Yet at the same time, many of the stakeholders the project must work with are the political elites, not the reformers.

Merrey (2013) summarised two key institutional theories, which I discuss in this synthesis – that of Ostrom and others, following mainstream

institutional thought (such as principal-agent, or agency theory), and that of Cleaver and others, with a critical institutional approach (or bricolage). Both consider the importance of human agency and the capacity of individuals to act and solve problems. The former, argues that basic principles can be used to design effective institutional processes and structures, in a rational manner – for instance, based on the assumption that individuals will act based on their own self-interest, a system of carrots and sticks can lead individuals to act appropriately. This is the basis for most development planning. The latter argues that motivations are not so clear-cut, and that there are multiple, sometimes conflicting, influences on individuals. Therefore, it can't be assumed that the planned carrots and sticks will function in the expected manner. Rather, bricolage takes place, with individuals and institutions acting in sometimes unexpected ways and adapting formal and non-formal processes. Both processes can be seen in action in the case studies, with interactions of individual actions and institutions (formal or informal).

Institutional bricolage within water management normally refers to local actors and communities, such as the User Groups (eg. Rusca and Schwartz, 2014), however, some have also applied it to donor staff (such as Jones, 2015, studying the role of WaterAid in facilitating bricolage), of government agencies (Funder and Marani, 2015, on the work of government officers as bricoleurs), or of development workers (Article V).

In development projects I have worked in, this translation is a complicated affair. For instance, it was assumed by project TA in Nepal that once households had their own toilet, planned and built with their own money, all household members would use it (in line with the Nepali National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan). However, villagers in isolated locations deemed menstrual taboos (and the risk of incurring the wrath of God if ignored) to be more important than sanitation. This is despite community members having a good understanding of the risks for those individual women forced to urinate and defaecate outside, and for the health of the whole community. In another example, the projects in Nepal have applied a Step-by-Step process[7], developed from experience over the last 20 years, to guide planning, implementation and monitoring of projects. This is a fairly traditional institutional approach designed by engineers, to guide the design, construction and management of the schemes. But as we found in Haapala et al (2016), at times User Groups chose not to follow the steps, instead applying a process of local adaptation or bricolage, following the steps that fitted their needs, and leaving out or changing others. Our research showed that in some User Groups, this led to problems of elite capture of the benefits, or poor maintenance, but in other cases bricolage led to more sustainable operation.

[7] The Step-by-Step approach (first developed in the Lumbini project 1990-2005, and modified within RWSSP-WN and RVWRMP) is a detailed operational guideline covering the steps for multiple stakeholders through the planning, implementation and post-construction phases of different types of infrastructure. It incorporates technical, social, institutional, environmental and financial aspects.
https://8b4410ba-234b-41d7-a94c-241149a3ad93.filesusr.com/ugd/b72297_200f14b0c66e496bb2aefc0b9e9fb5e4.pdf

Merrey and Cook (2012) advocate for bricolage, as a means to use the best of both worlds and not idolising indigenous systems. They argue that the result of applying bricolage "should not be to replace existing institutional arrangements; rather it should be to complement and strengthen positive aspects while encouraging a creative process to strengthen weak components and reform those that are unfair, non-inclusive, and inequitable" (Merrey and Cook, 2012, p. 13). The challenge is find this happy medium.

In his description of capacity building, Tandon (2010) argues that if it genuinely aims to reach the marginalised, it "involves the bumping together and shifting of power relations and practices that have hitherto been accepted as 'the way things are'." (p.94). This was referred to in Article IV, noting that Tandon stressed it is impossible for practitioners to avoid taking some sort of stand in their work. This was clear in the case study projects. By insisting on inclusion of disadvantaged groups (due to sex, caste, ethnicity or religion), the TA need to take a stand, even if it meant setting quotas or discussing the reasons for policies on non-discrimination.

Haapala and Keskinen (2018) argue that "projects inevitably must make political, value-laden prioritizations in their everyday operations. However, project management is paradoxically mandated to negotiate and perform only as a politically neutral, implementing actor" (p.142). In addition, policies that work in one location may not achieve the same result in another, and there is an inevitable tension that exists between project design, and local customs and realities (Rondinelli, 2013; Behrends, 2014, Haapala and White, 2015). This was also a finding of Koponen et al (2012) – "every foreign idea, value, knowledge or technology has a historical, institutional and structural context. There are no universal values and no knowledge that can simply be transferred, used and adapted without conscious unpacking of the contextual processes before use" (p.147). Consequently, the TA have considerable power and responsibility for interpreting the best fit of the policy to the practical setting. TA are obliged to make decisions on the run, as well as building the capacities of local staff to take over this role in the future.

Over the last 20 years, researchers have used ethnographic methods to study development workers themselves. Mosse (2004, 2005) used ethnography to study development projects, in particular with a long-running DfID-funded rural development project in India, the Indo-British Rainfed Farming project (IBRFP), where he worked as a consultant. He argued that whether projects are considered successful or not is not so much a matter of whether design is turned into reality, but rather whether or not 'policy models' are sustained. Broken down, this meant that at the design stage, policy (development models, strategies and project designs) primarily functions to mobilize and maintain political support, and to legitimize rather than to orientate practice. By the implementation stage of the project, the relationships between all levels of actors and the need to follow the administrative rules, become more important than policy. Policy and practices also had to be translated across institutional and cultural boundaries. The TA

team had the role of mediating at the interface between project operations and donor policy, interpreting each to the other, though at times remaining separate. Articles IV and V reflect this reality in Nepal and all other projects I have worked with. The relationships between donor and recipient government provide normative and regulatory elements, such as policies, and administrative and financial guidelines to the projects. However, policy guidance remains quite general. More critical, are the programme document (with its results framework to measure performance), the local relationships (in order to make things work); and financial and administrative control. Compliance with these elements is required, for the project to function and invoices to be paid.

Saarilehto (2009) in his study of the earlier Finnish funding to the Lumbini project (1990-2005), argued that in practice decisions were controlled by the project TA, rather than the donor. The TA were go-betweens situated between donors and project beneficiaries, and were involved in preparation of practical guidelines and dissemination of donor values. "Most of the actual power in the direction of the schemes and training rested on the PSU personnel. The UCs [User Committees] and the SOs [Support Organisations] had very important roles at the scheme level, but not above that." (Saarilehto, 2009, p.84). This is clear in the more recent case study project examples from Nepal (and often elsewhere, in my personal experience). The donor and even national stakeholders are far from the field, and have delegated responsibility to the consulting company and the project TA (as in Figure 2 - the 'Development Cooperation Octangle' of Ostrom et al, 2001). This is one of my key arguments, outlined in Articles III, IV and V.

Merry (2006 and 2006b) looked at the translation of human rights concepts to local level. "Translation takes place within fields of unequal power. Translators' work is influenced by who is funding them; their ethnic, gender, or other social commitments; and institutional frameworks that create opportunities for wealth and power." (Merry, 2006b, p.40). The translators take the global concepts of human rights and attach them to issues of interest at local level. However, these new ideas may be ignored, or they may be transformed far from the original idea. In addition, she notes "If they present human rights as compatible with existing ways of thinking, these ideas will not induce change. It is only their capacity to challenge existing power relations that offers radical possibilities… [they] must assess to what extent they can challenge existing modes of thinking and to what extent they must conceal radical ideas in familiar packages" (p.41). Merry highlights the role of development worker as translator: "In development as in human rights implementation, competing ideas of action, objectivity, and value coexist and must be translated in situations of substantial inequality. The consultant, as broker and translator, is caught in the middle." (Merry, 2006b, p.43). In the case of the Nepal projects, TA have brokered in concepts such as the human right to water, while stepping carefully, as there is a risk of political unrest if rights are discussed too loudly in Nepal (comments from Nepalese

government respondents prior to the approval of the new Constitution, during a period of considerably political unrest). The key elements of the HRBA are applied, but with local fit. For example, with regard to menstruation, the TA start with the most important elements, such as the woman's right to sleep in a safe place, use her own toilet, access the tap and eat nutritious food. They don't raise more complex issues such as her access to her own kitchen or to the temple during menstruation.

Describing the concept of bricolage, within critical institutional theory, Cleaver (2002, 2012) also considers the way models or institutional arrangements are reshaped, involving a do-it-yourself institutional development by the local community, water committee or other organisation (though not without risk). This can be deliberately facilitated by TA, or it can happen unintentionally. As noted above, Haapala et al (2016) looked at the way this happened in practice in one of the case study projects. This can be problematic and there is a risk of elite capture. The existing strong community actors may take over the new structures and use the funds, contrary to the anticipated steps of the project. However, bricolage can also lead to the development of new innovations with a good local fit. The article recommended that TA and projects facilitate bricolage processes by community organisations during both design and implementation.

Recently Cleaver and Whaley (2018) compared the schools of thought of adaptive governance and critical institutionalism, both with a background in commons scholarship. They highlighted the advantages and gaps in each approach. They conclude both have useful aspects. In particular, attention to power, process and meaning are beneficial for adaptive governance approaches. For instance, in the case of the TA and the Nepal water projects, the TA can be champions of transformation, managing conflicts and creating learning environments. At the same time they should recognise that they have the power to command and allocate resources, set the agenda and legitimise adapted arrangements. While there is an implicit assumption of their agency, as part of the project institution, it is also enabled and constrained by the complex networks and webs of relationships. It reminds us of the importance of considering hidden processes that may be obstacles to change.

Chambers (2017) described the key forces and behaviours that he believes inhibit development.

> "These are, first, relational and personal (power, interests, mindsets, and ego); second, data-related (misleading data, extrapolating out of context, and overlooking history); and third, behavioural and experiential (embedding narratives and beliefs; distance and insulation; selective experiences through visits, presentations and perceptions; repeating narratives, stories and statistics; repetitive confirmation bias; public relations, soundbites and speeches; and reimagining and rewriting history assisted by the self-serving malleability of memory). Combined variously in different contexts,

> these factors and forces stand in the way of knowing better." (Chambers, 2017, p. 1).

These issues (particularly the first and the third), I can recognise in myself, and they are clearly risks and forces faced by my respondents. It requires a deliberate, periodic reflexive view, to check whether I am falling into behavioural traps. In many ways, this is an advantage of combining research with development practice, as it exposes me to other viewpoints. These are elements for all involved in development to bear in mind, throughout the spectrum of development cooperation, be they donor or recipient government staff, NGOs, consultants or local government representatives.

"Who benefits, who loses? Who decides, who is consulted, who is not? Whose values count?" asked Gasper (2012, p, 118). Naturally if we consider that the role of the outsider expert as a broker or translator is important, then his/her behaviour is magnified in importance. This is one reason why I wanted to examine the motivations of the TA (Article I), the competencies they learn (Article II), and then how they function in the field setting (Articles IV and V). Clearly this is where projects may go horribly wrong – if there is insufficient consideration of the incentives of different actors, or if there is insufficient balance between the values of different members of the community.

Gasper (2012) and Chambers (in various publications, most recently in 2017) discuss elements of an "informal professional ethic, an ethos of ethical development:- sensitivity to the power of language and to who controls it, and a search for effective generative concepts; an openness to listening, which is the most important influence on the effectiveness of techniques of participatory research and planning, far more important than the technical details; and an openness to self-criticism, including about one's own lifestyle, and to learning how to be more while having less." (Gasper, 2012, p.129).

Articles IV and V demonstrated the role played by international and local staff in the case study projects in brokering Nepalese and Finnish policies into a locally fitting practice, and feeding the results back up to influence the policy makers.

3.3.4 PRINCIPAL - AGENT THEORY

The principal-agent relationship appears to be a good basis for discussion of the way that development workers are acting, far from the donor who assigned the task. In principal-agent, or agency theory (an element within mainstream institutional theory), the principal delegates work to the agent, leading to potential risks as the two parties have different motivations and preferences. The principal cannot be sure whether the agent is carrying out the work as they wish (Eisenhardt, 1989; Brett, 2003; and Caldwell et al, 2006). This relationship applies in a wide range of institutional settings. In the case of the development consulting world, the donors use contracts and other regulatory tools, as well as audits and reports, to ensure the consultants behave according to donor expectations. Since the performance of consulting company work is

far from the donor HQ, normative and cultural elements are also critical. While the development staff need to abide by the project document in general, they can make decisions independently on a day-to-day basis. This relationship also exists in different layers. It could be that the principal is the donor, and the agent is the TA. However, the principal-actor relationship can also take place at a lower level – for instance with a consulting company as the principal and the local field staff as agents. This was addressed in Articles III IV and V.

Edgren (2002) talked of the pressures on different actors in this chain. Donor agencies have vested interests in showing success in partner countries. They depend on their government counterparts in recipient countries to produce the 'indicators' of this 'success'. Edgren also noted that "agency officials feel under pressure to disburse resources allocated to their programmes. This pressure is passed on to their counterparts and to project personnel. A principal-agent analysis of this system suggests that the incentives in this relationship are perverse and information flows asymmetrical" (p. 264). As donors are expected to pay for most costs, recipient governments have limited incentive to end the project, and the project personnel and NGOs are reliant on the system.

In practice, companies, consultants or project staff tend to develop shared values and cultures with the Client, creating an 'alliance' to address collective problems. Ostrom et al (2001) and later Gibson et al (2005) presented the Development Cooperation Octangle, where all of the actors (including donor and recipient governments, consulting companies and NGOs) are involved in potentially difficult collective action problems and principal–agent relationships. Figure 2, adapted accordingly, shows the actors involved in Finnish bilateral aid. Most of the actors see the octangle from their own position, yet all are inter-connected. I am certain that NGOs (at least the Finnish or International NGOs) would see themselves in the central position in the octangle, however, in this study I am looking more at the bilateral projects implemented via companies.

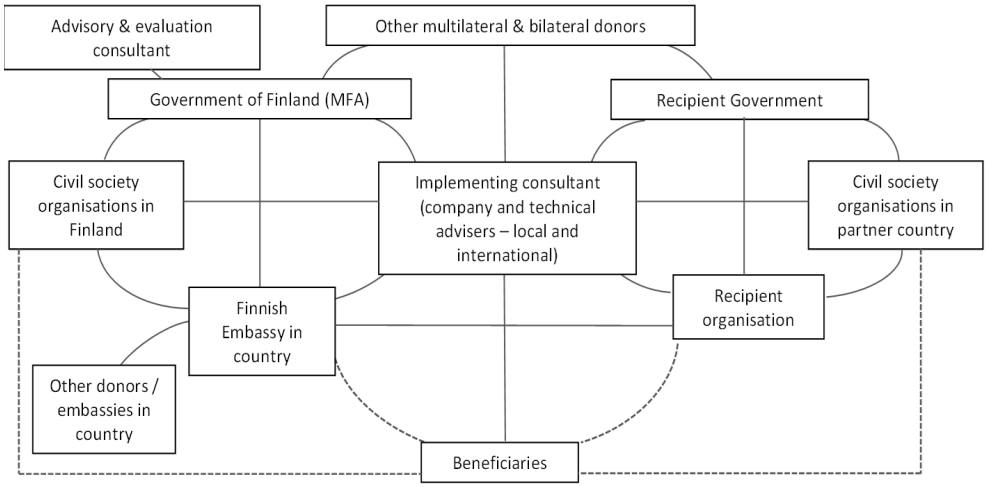

Figure 2. The Complex Network of Relationships between Stakeholders reflecting the bilateral aid financed by Finland

Source: adapted from Ostrom et al, 2001, and Gibson et al, 2005

Gibson et al identified several issues of importance to the good functioning of this network or 'Octangle': 1. the importance of incentives; 2. paying attention to the nature of the goods involved; 3. the relationship between ownership and sustainability; 4. the way in which learning is encouraged at an individual and organizational level; 5. the role of consultants in development assistance; and 6. the importance of putting the beneficiaries first (Gibson et al., 2005).

All these issues are closely tied to political/economic, institutional and individual incentives for all actors. I will discuss points 1 and 3 separately below. With respect to the nature of the goods involved, Gibson et al (2005) discuss the collective-action problem of providing public goods (such as, in my study, a communal water supply), whereby individuals have limited incentive to participate. Instead they tend to be free-riders, as compared with the clearer incentives to be actively involved if the outcome of an activity is a private good. In this scenario the project TA play an important role to design institutional structures that encourage full participation of all. Probably the biggest threat for sustainability comes from beneficiaries who lose interest in the project. The Nepal water projects have used a Step-by-Step process for planning, construction and operation and maintenance of the different infrastructure schemes, developed and adjusted over many years to achieve the best (though imperfect) result in the local setting. Another method to overcome the common pool resource problem is to change the nature of the good, by introducing private goods to the system. In the case of water schemes, owners

of private taps generally pay user fees and maintain the overall system more actively.

Without ownership by the local stakeholders it is unlikely that the project outcomes will be sustained, or even achieved at all. Yet who is the owner of the project? If the owner is the national government and not the local level beneficiaries, the latter may have limited information and interest. One of the greatest contributing factors is the funding modality. In one rural development project I worked with in Africa, the donor changed the fund flow prior to the start of work, so that it passed only through the consulting company (due to concerns regarding corruption risks). The recipient government immediately lost interest to participate. Despite every effort by TA to involve the government officials, the project never achieved local ownership. While the beneficiaries were interested and community level activities could still be achieved, the sustainability is doubtful. In the Nepal case study projects, the funding and ownership is in a real sense at the local government level since recent elections, with the TA keeping elected officials informed and involved. By also ensuring transparency, participation, information sharing and equitable benefit sharing for community members, there is the best chance for both institutional and technical sustainability. This is demonstrated, comparing the water schemes implemented by community user groups and the projects, versus the national average, in White et al, 2015. The question is whether the new behaviours, particularly on difficult issues such as rights, taboos and values, will be sustained as well as the technical and institutional changes.

Karambiri (2019) found that in her case study communities involved in forest management in Burkina Faso, there were both positive and negative outcomes of the participatory management institutions. The positives were linked to strengthened decentralisation, while the policy translation processes based on forest user groups were creating parallel and competing institutions and undermining democratically elected governments. As noted by Crewe and Harrison (1998) and many others, there is a risk of assuming a romantic notion of the local community. Yet there is no one cohesive view of any policy or practice, just as in donor countries it is unlikely that a community will all agree. At least now, in Nepal, there are elected local governments, rather than the experience of the last twenty years of remote decision-making. To date at least, these governments are playing an important role in directing water governance, although facing limitations of capacity (Article VII).

The incentives of each member of the network are important. Each actor, be it institutions or individuals, has an opportunity to support or impair the implementation of development cooperation. Koponen et al (2012) refer to the importance of the individuals in Nepal, where Finnish individuals in the Embassy and MFA were able to block progress in the forestry sector; while in the water sector, a group of individuals have been instrumental for success. "The right people in the right place, or the wrong people in the wrong place, can thus make quite a difference" (Koponen et al, 2012, p.74-75). Paul and

Robinson (2005) also come back to the issue of incentives at each layer: "While materialistic self-interest is an important element of individual motivation, so also in many areas of government are "public service motivation" and other forms of non-materialistic motivation (social, moral and intrinsic)."(p. 40).

In the Nepal water projects, as in many development projects, the beneficiaries are recipients of the financial and technical cooperation and capacity building, though they also play a role in delivery via User Committees, voluntary work, financial contribution, etc. If the activity is appropriately planned, they should have a considerable incentive to participate and achieve a positive outcome. However, they may quickly learn to become dependent on financial incentives such as daily allowances. Security, land tenure, community and household power and status are also important motivations for individuals, and vary greatly between men and women, and those from different backgrounds (Crewe and Harrison, 1998, p.113-31).

Almost all individuals in the network of stakeholders would claim a degree of public service motivation, as discussed earlier. Many exhibit an individual or communal urge to 'do good' or a desire to serve the community. They demonstrate a combination of social, moral and intrinsic motivations, which provide a non-financial incentive or reward (which I discuss in Articles I and II, and which Nepalese staff spoke of in Article V). Given that there are now local government elections, it is also in the interests of politicians to be seen to facilitate access to outcomes of a well-functioning project. Financial incentives and rent seeking are common to all who directly work in the network, given that almost all get a salary from the business, whether NGOs, government or consultant staff, or even researchers. Donor government staff may not receive as high a salary as they could in the private sector, but they have greater power and perhaps status. Aid often pays for the recipient government staff salaries, sometimes at a higher rate than their normal salary, at least in the form of allowances. This creates an incentive to participate. As I argue in Article I (and in the Chapter 3.3.1 on Motivations), motivations are not fixed to any specific role. While money may motivate some consultants, it is not necessarily the motivation for all. There is no clear binary of altruistic NGO staff and greedy consultants. (White, 2015). "Plainly money alone does not drive the behaviour of those working in development, any more than it does that of [beneficiaries]" (Crewe and Harrison, 1998, p.131). Shutt (2012) raises the idea that guilt may influence behaviours "Whether the reproduction of the idea of Aidland as a moral economy is a manifestation of genuine guilt and moral responsibility by individual aid workers, or rather the result of social pressure generated within a system produced by flows of money that tends to be given special moral meaning, is open to debate. The important point is that the idea of a moral Aidland economy has currency" (p.1534).

Individuals, and particularly TA, do have a role to prevent or restrain corrupt practices or mismanagement. In some projects, the donor has chosen that the funds flow through the consulting company for all activities, as in the example described earlier. Therefore, the TA has a strong incentive to ensure

the money is spent according to plans. Otherwise the company runs the risk of not being able to invoice for expenditure. In other cases, such as the two case study projects in Nepal, the TA funds (fees, capacity building and running costs) flow through the company, while the implementation funds flow directly to the local government bodies. In this case, the TA have the responsibility to work alongside the municipality, supporting them to plan and monitor their own expenditure. This is different to the experience from sector or budget support, or even financial support to UN organisations, where there is considerably less control by the donor of how the money is used. Even if there is TA provided, it is more 'hands off'.

In some cases, the positioning of the TA in such a critical point between donors and others can give them power that can be used for personal ends (or even facilitate corrupt practices). Koch and Weingart (2017) have a more critical take on technical experts (and their role in the octangle).

> 'Experts' brokerage facilitates the transfer of monetary and non-monetary resources from one side to the other, putting them in a crucial middle position in the aid arena where they constitute a 'strategic group' with distinct interests. In the triad of aid relations, this group ...benefits from the opportunity to make profits and increase its own status, to accumulate power and expand its scope of influence. .. development experts are described as a transnational epistemic community with a particular stock of shared knowledge whose roles and help to explain their impact in recipient countries.' (Koch and Weingart, 2017, p.65-66)

On the other hand, Gibson et al (2015) tried to separate the impact of development money from TA. They demonstrated that technical assistance is associated with a higher degree of donor oversight than other aid modalities. As such, technical assistance has the effect of decreasing fungible[8] resources and promoting liberalisation.

In Article V we discussed the pressures that the local TA face in the case study projects. It described the balance TA must find between establishing good relationships with local government and community members, but not giving in to pressure for corrupt practices. They reported that the project guidelines were vital in supporting them in this stand. In one project I worked with in south east Asia, the TA instituted a procedure of blacklisting local construction companies found to be involved in corrupt practices during tendering. After one year, the process had saved more than the cost of the Chief Technical Advisor. However, it soon became clear that almost every company was involved to some degree in corruption. As a result, the 'least bad' offenders had to be allowed to tender again the following year! In some other cases,

[8] Fungibility refers to the interchangeability of assets. In the case of development aid, it refers to the possibility that aid is used in ways not intended by donors when disbursing the funds – for instance, to fund activities in different sectors or for the personal enrichment of the recipient decision-makers. It is often raised with reference to the budget support modality (Leiderer, 2012).

however, it appears that TA look the other way, as the system is too difficult to challenge, or because they don't want to threaten future tender possibilities.

The consulting company needs to earn an overhead (which comes only from TA fees), and has a perverse incentive (along with the TA) to control the flow of information back to the principal, at least regarding problems (discussed in Article III). The company has very little control over the potential fees to be earned in a project or assignment, as this is limited by the Client. However, by performing well and maintaining a good relationship with the principal, the company also has the opportunity to win more contracts in the future. The company staff (TA) are also interested to preserve their reputations. Successful implementation is often judged by the ownership of project activities by local actors. The TA also face the problem that the more power is given to the local authorities and beneficiaries, the more risk there is for implementation to go wrong, which would reflect badly on the TA and company (Ostrom et al, 2001; Gibson et al, 2005; Saarilehto, 2009). There is also the potential for corrupt gains for contractors, government staff and individuals, though in the case of the Finnish bilateral aid, financial aspects are controlled tightly and audited regularly.

Donor agencies have an interest to achieve visible results and justify their fund flows to taxpayers. As noted earlier, in the case of the Finnish government, there are a range of incentives to participate in development cooperation, including political image. Aid may take pressure off the recipient government, allowing them to deal with some pressing problems. Aid may also be fungible (Herbert, 2012). Both donor and recipient governments and their staff have interests to participate in the information flow. However, the experience from project management is that decision-making is often paralysed while legal or administrative decisions from above are pending. Aid dependency has emerged as a serious issue in some countries. Recipient governments can be dependent on foreign aid to fund their public investments and public services. In these circumstances, as discussed by, for instance, Edgren (2002) and Yanguas (2018), difficult principal–agent relationships abound. Completion of project anticipated outcomes on time may not serve the interests of all.

Agency theory is based on the assumption that both parties are interested in material wealth. While this is an important driver, is not necessarily always the most significant motivation in development cooperation, remembering other aspects such as altruism, political influence, etc. Chambers (2017) described the recent changes in the system, with pressure on donors to cut staff and focus on larger projects, as well as donors such as DfID demanding payment for results. In theory, the new modality of payment-for-results should incentivise the recipient government, consulting companies and NGOs in the network to comply with plans and provide value for money. However, it also centralises power in the hands of the donor in a top-down fashion, which is quite the opposite of the discourse of participation and empowerment, high in the policy agendas of most donors. It also tends to frustrate TA working at the

'coal-face', and expected to deliver results no matter whether they are a good fit with local conditions (Fechter, 2017).

Honig (2018) also describes his view of principal-agent theory in development cooperation: Typical international development organisations (IDOs) cannot be sure exactly what their 'agent' is doing. Some IDOs focus on strengthening principal control by tying payments, contracts and measures of success, to outcomes that the principal can observe. Honig argues that in environments that are not very predictable (due to remoteness, conflict or just messy political situations) or when results are less verifiable (due to the nature of the intervention), top-down control becomes less effective. This is the case, for instance, when results of capacity building are more difficult to verify than delivery of vaccines. In these environments, Honig argues that it is more appropriate to apply 'navigation by judgement' or stewardship. This entails allowing field agents to exercise their judgement, based on their knowledge and experience of local conditions. This might mean changes to the logical framework, the geographic areas, the tools applied, or more. This also means that there is more risk when the principal becomes more dependent on the agent to do the 'right thing'.

Mayer (2017) noted the importance of the principal-agent relationship in her study of development cooperation in the field of meteorology. The importance was seen both between the donor and the meteorological institution (government) actors, but also in the difficulties and hindrances placed on private sector consultants by the donor, based on ethical concerns.

Davis et al (1997) argued that agency theory is inappropriate when the parties hold shared values. They argue that stewardship theory is more relevant. It assumes that managers, left on their own, will act as responsible stewards of the assets they control. Aßländer et al (2016) discussed whether agency theory or stewardship is most relevant to the clothing supply chain, a much more profit-based venture than development. They found that even there, use of stewardship would be a likely to result in good social, environmental and economic outcomes.

Stewardship is typically applied to NGOs. There is considerable variation between NGOs. Part of the variation is based on the local setting. For instance, Salemink (2006) described how in Vietnam the concept of 'civil society' virtually doesn't exist. Domestic NGOs therefore tended to be closely bound to international development activities, attempting to introduce international discourses. Yet in other countries (for instance, in my experience in Nicaragua), local NGOs can be active, political actors, working in the interface between government and communities. In some countries they may be local-level, small-scale operations, operating on a shoestring, and at times, only marginally different from a local consulting company in that they are not profitable. Local NGOs in many countries are often contracted for community activities by UN institutions or bilateral projects. The two case study projects contract many local NGOs to facilitate community operations. International and Finnish NGOs also partner with local NGOs.

International NGOs (INGOs) became prominent in the 1980s, with structural adjustment. Some had their origins much earlier in missionary movements, while others were more focused on charity, solidarity or political aims. In the 1990s they began to merge international branches and also professionalised, in response to donors' demands for more effectiveness (Roth, 2012; Kane, 2013). They are reliant on both individual and government donors in their home countries in order to build relationships with civil society in developing countries. In the case of Finnish NGOs, normally 15% of the funding must come from non-government sources (for instance donations or product sales), in order for the NGO to qualify for MFA co-funding (in the case of some, for instance those working with disability, the contribution is lower). They should be non-profit organisations that operate politically and administratively independent of governments. Some INGOs have also moved to find corporate funding, though this has some ethical risks (Molina-Gallart, 2014).

This changing modus operandi, has introduced concepts such as value for money, pressure to demonstrate impact, and a need to recruit more professional staff – much as with consulting companies (Wallace, 1997). As the aims and requirements of consultants and NGOs tend to converge, so do their costs. The cost to the financier of technical assistance provided by government institutions, INGOs and consulting company staff are almost the same now in Finland (personal experience, and archive records of the MFA Finland). In practice that has led to movement between different entities, particularly in a small country like Finland. This was notable among my respondents in Article I. Despite the divergence between the typically instrumentalist aims of the consulting company and the ideological aims of NGOs, the operations of the two are rapidly converging. Both NGOs and consulting companies usually aspire (at least in their public discourse) to 'do good' and are dependent on donor funds. Arvidson studied NGOs in Bangladesh (2008). She identified a common identity among NGO staff, who should be professional towards clients and have a caring and understanding personality, with work motivations based on altruistic values. She found that although the NGOs expressed their own goals and ideologies, their activities were defined by the donors. This is precisely the dilemma that consulting companies face. How much freedom do they have to 'do good' beyond the confines of the project document? (also discussed in Article III).

NGOs differ from consulting companies in the sense that the latter has a requirement to strive to make a profit for their owners, while any savings from consultancy work within the NGO can be reinvested in development activities and advocacy. Many NGOs (both INGOs and Finnish) also play an important role in development education among their 'home' constituency. For some Finnish NGOs this is a major part of their work (and a very important role), while others are more focused on the work abroad. There is also a considerable difference in the freedom of operation NGOs have, due to the perception shared values and a common goal with the principal. Finnish NGOs generally

work closely with local NGOs to develop project proposals, which are then submitted to the MFA for approval. In the case of bilateral projects, the project document is provided at the start. An important role of Finnish NGOs is to strengthen the actors (civil society), not only the grassroots beneficiaries, however this varies between organisations. Naturally this is also a role of bilateral projects, who are carrying out capacity building with government as well as local NGOs.

Some INGOs that have NGO status in Finland (such as Red Cross, World Wildlife Fund and Plan) also do implementation in the field, but through their local NGO branch and often in cooperation with other local NGOs. There are few Finnish NGO TA based in the field, apart from humanitarian operations. Church-based organisations like Finn Church Aid (FCA), FELM (until 2016, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission), and FIDA, who historically have had a big implementation role in their projects, nowadays mainly have Finnish staff in supervision and coordination roles. Again, this is similar to the bilateral project modality.

In

Table 2 below, I have adapted the analysis of Aßländer et al (2016) of the differences between the two theories, with the development octangle in mind.

Table 2. Differences in agency and stewardship relationships in development

	Agency theory	Stewardship theory
Autonomy	Agent has to be controlled by the principal; monitoring and incentives have to forestall opportunistic behaviour. In the case of development cooperation via companies (and to some extent, via recipient governments), this control includes a range of instruments, such as tenders, project documents, guidelines, audits, monitoring and evaluation.	Steward acts autonomously in the interest of the principal with limited control by contracts and policy guidance. In the case of aid via UN organisations or other multilaterals, via the Finnish institutional cooperation instrument, or to some extent, with NGOs, the control is lighter.
Motivation	Agent is assumed to follow extrinsic motivations (including money); compliance is ensured by monetary incentives and strict control.	Steward is assumed to be motivated intrinsically and to understand him-/herself as a representative of the principal.
Identification	Weak identification with the organization; agent is assumed to pursue personal targets which are not necessarily in line with principals' goals.	Strong identification with the organization; steward is assumed to share the organizational goals.
Authority	Principal's authority is based on formal power relations, audits and the ability to end contracts.	Principal's authority is based on assumption that the steward will act in the principal's best interests.

Stakeholder orientation	Agent follows own interests, which are aligned with shareholder interests by reward and control systems.	Behaviour of the agent is assumed to adhere to high ethical standards and be directed at benefiting all stakeholders.
Knowledge and trust	Principal knows little about the way of working of the agent. Agent remains invisible as part of the work of the principal. The principal does not trust the agent.	Steward's work and values are well known to the principal and the public. The principal assumes they can trust and respect the steward.

Adapted from Aßländer et al (2016)

In Article III, I argue that moving the donor-consulting company relationship away from the principal-agent relationship towards stewardship might improve development outcomes, allowing companies and their TA to focus more on the desired outcome, and less on micro-management. Stirrat (2000) argued that the short term TA are forced "to produce reports which have only a tangential relationship to the world they are trying to influence, and forced to engage in a seemingly futile production of paper and plans rather than action and deeds." (p. 43) More emphasis on achieving the shared goals, rather than audits and reports, might be beneficial.

Other movements within political governance to try to improve aid effectiveness, in recent times, have been - Thinking and Working Politically (TWP)[9] and Doing Development Differently (DDD)[10]. They are described in the links in the footnotes. They operate quite differently to the push for VfM and tight measurement.

In an influential study, Booth and Undsworth (2014) noted several pertinent findings regarding TWP experiences in several countries. The projects "started with a significant development problem and searched for a workable solution in an iterative, learning-oriented way. None of the initiatives started with a blueprint, applying a known solution mapped out in advance. Project management involved an element of 'muddling through' but this was purposive muddling, with definite goals in mind. It involved experimentation, but this was not random; it was well informed and strategic" (p. 13) A key success factor in their case studies was the unusual continuity of donor and project level staffing, which allowed building of trust and institutional memory. It also meant that the TA had developed strong knowledge of the local issues, and built relationships with local leadership. Naturally it also relied upon flexible funding – with the donor not insisting on set indicators.

Dasandi et al, 2019, carried out a review of case studies of projects claiming to apply TWP, mainly funded by DFID (UK), DFAT (Australia) and the World

[9] TWP – A Guide For Practitioners
https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/pea_guide_final.pdf

[10] DDD Manifesto - https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/events-documents/5149.pdf

Bank, and mainly in the sectors of governance and justice. They considered that there was insufficient evidence yet to say that this works to improve effectiveness. Dasandi et al noted a few useful practices, such as TA allowing local actors to take the lead, and project staff brokering relationships with major interest groups. However, he felt that, while promising, the studies were not yet sufficiently rigorous to provide serious guidance.

DDD overlaps to some extent with TWP, and has also developed from the spectrum of aid professionals working at different levels and aiming to find a better way. DDD tries to include politically-informed and adaptive ways of thinking and working in an attempt to do development aid more effectively (Booth and Unsworth, 2014; Yanguas, 2018; Dasandi et al, 2019). It also aims to build learning into project design from the start and continuing throughout implementation, and to build the evidence in order to improve implementation (Booth et al, 2016). The World Bank's involvement has been called Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (Andrews et al, 2017).

3.4 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM FINLAND

The historical trajectory of Finnish aid differs to that of the larger donor countries, partly due to its size and late entry to development, and because Finland has no colonial history. Almost the only early ties to countries in the south were from missionary activities. After WWII, Finns were sent to work with the UN as technical experts. The scattered development-related activities under the auspices of the Finnish Foreign Ministry were gathered together, when the first Finnish Committee for Development Aid was established in 1961, and the Bureau for Development Aid was established in the MFA, on the basis of the Committee's work (Koponen, 1999). While the other Nordics joined the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) in the early 1960s (Norway – 1962, Denmark – 1963, Sweden – 1965), Finland didn't join until 1975. In 1965, the first Associate Professional Officers (later part of the general Junior Professional Officer program) began work at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Around the same time Finland began to send technical advisers to developing countries and to carry out training programs. The advisers were either employed by the Finnish Government or sent via institutional or consulting company partners (Koponen, 2005).

What motivated Finland to support development cooperation? The colonial motivation of some countries, such as the UK, France, Spain and Germany, are not a good fit. Riddell (2007) argued for developmentalism, saying that "Historically, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark and Finland have stood out as donors who have articulated solidarity and development as major factors influencing their allocation of aid" (Riddell,

2007, p.96). In contrast, he argued that the US and Japan provide aid explicitly to enhance their own security and prosperity. Most donors are committed to some extent to welfare and development criteria, but some specifically focus on their own neighbours, with a clear link to foreign policy. Examples include the EU, Australia and New Zealand. Others, such as Koponen and Siitonen (2006) argue that aid was more instrumentalist in the early days of Finland's development cooperation. It was used to open Finland up and to develop the profile of Finland as a Western country. Finland was a relatively poor country after World War II, small in size and geographically isolated, with limited contacts with the outside world. Development cooperation was an opportunity to build a new, independent Nordic profile. Developmentalist ideas were evident from the start but strengthened with time.

During the mid-1980s, Finland's plan was to support economic and social development, with an emphasis on directing aid towards those countries and sectors where Finland had competitive resources to offer. Mayer (2017) argues that utilising Finnish knowhow and expertise was an important consideration. "Finnish resources were first mapped out and then needs to match these resources were looked for in developing countries" (p.105).

The majority of Finland's aid is not directed to its neighbours, though during the 1990s and 2000s there were some contributions to development in nearby parts of Russia. Long-term development partners of Finland have been in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Currently these long term partner countries include Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Somalia and Zambia in Africa; and Nepal, Myanmar and Afghanistan in Asia. Of the earlier African partners, Namibia, South Africa and Egypt were phased out due to their graduation into middle income status, and Zambia soon to exit. In Asia, Vietnam will soon to be phased out, beyond private sector cooperation, and aid to the other Mekong countries has ended. All bilateral support to countries in Latin America has been phased out, other than limited private sector and NGO support. The goals of the current development policy of Finland are eradication of poverty and inequality and the promotion of sustainable development, including consideration of issues such as climate change, human rights and gender equality. Some aid also trickles to the Palestinian Territory, Ukraine and Central Asia; and to northern Africa. Some aid is also directed to conflict countries, such as Iraq and Syria (MFA Finland, 2016; and MFA website). In earlier years the aid was more scattered, partly following current political interests; and partly responding to visits by Ministers of Foreign Affairs or Development Cooperation.

The different modalities funded with Finnish development funding in the last 20 years have included:

- Technical assistance (short and long term), rarely as individuals recruited directly by the MFA, or typically via companies, usually as a part of bilateral projects, though occasionally as TA supporting governments.
- Junior Professional Officer programme and UN Volunteers – posting of Finnish young technical staff to UN organisations, the World Bank, CGIAR and the EU

- Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)/civil society – via programme and project support, development education, etc.
- Development research funding and scholarships for students from the South to study in Finland.
- Twinning and institutional cooperation – including municipalities, universities and training institutions, government agencies
- Budget support and sector support – mainly involving financial transfers (with or without technical support)
- Multilateral support – targeted or general funds for organisations such as the UN, EC, development banks, or via specific funds, such as REDD+, GCF
- Concessional credit or bank guarantees, usually linked to Finnish enterprises
- Private sector development funding

In the late 1960s–1970s stipended volunteer workers went to Tanzania with support from the Finnish Government (kehitysjoukko) in a variety of community-level roles (Koponen, 2005). Finland briefly had a national volunteer program, the Finnish Volunteer Service, managed by KEPA from 1985. Professionals were supported in long term posts (typically for two years) on a limited salary in Zambia, Nicaragua and Mozambique. In 1995 an evaluation concluded that KEPA's volunteer programme had limited relevance or effectiveness, and was relatively costly, so the programme was ended (the last placements were phased out by 2002) (Peberdy et al, 2005). A shorter term volunteer program (ETVO) combined with NGO twinning and development education (including some placements for southern volunteers in Finland), also ran until the early 2010s, but has now ended – partly because the government support ended.

Finland has supported placements of young Finnish professionals in bilateral projects and multilateral organisations since the 1960s. In the absence of a national volunteer program, these placements are the main way for Finns to take their first step into international development experience. They include Junior Professional Officer assignments (also referred to as JPOs, or Associate Professional Officers, APOs) beginning in 1965 in multilateral organisations, including the UN, World Bank, EU and CGIAR organisations. The Evaluation of the JPO activities (White et al, 2011) found that there were both foreign policy and development objectives for these placements. Most prominent for foreign policy was the hope that after their assignment, the JPOs might be retained for policy level posts in the UN and other multilateral organisations – a very instrumentalist expectation. It was also anticipated that the JPO programme would be a means to develop competent and experienced Finnish development professionals for future

work. At the same time the JPOs would support the work of the multilateral organisations, increasing links and understanding between those organisations and Finland, and representing Finnish expertise on the international stage. The evaluation found that while the JPO program was valuable, not all of these objectives were achieved – in particular, there is a very low retention rate (White et al, 2011). The evaluation showed that Finland was an important provider of JPOs, punching above its weight. It provided the most JPOs amongst the Nordic countries, both in absolute numbers and in proportion to the population. However, with the cuts to development funding in 2015, the number of JPO posts was significantly reduced.

Postings of junior experts to bilateral projects have taken place since 2000. An internal MFA memo gave the aim as 'to develop internationally competitive, successful young development professionals' (MFA Finland, 2000). In theory, these placements are a learning opportunity and springboard for further work. In practice few junior experts or JPOs are able to progress to 'expert' assignments, as there are few mid-level posts any more, and government rules for support and training are vague. The aim of the junior posts is unclear: Is the purpose experiential learning and sharing, capacity building for the individual, or technical assistance for the local partner? Links with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) are few and the guidelines for recruitment and management are vague, although improving. A survey of current and past bilateral and multilateral JPOs reveals that most had a positive experience and learned a lot, but they express frustration at missed opportunities, lack of interest of the MFA and the inability to get further assignments due to insufficient experience. (White, 2011)

The policy changes and level of funding for the different modalities varies with time. This is influenced by international trends but also by the focus of the government of the day. This became abundantly clear when the recession hit in the early 1990s. The large projects with big TA teams of the 1980s ended, many of which had links to Finnish commercial interests. Projects continued to be run by consulting companies, but most had much smaller teams and a clearer emphasis of developmentalist values, although concessional credit continued in various forms (Koponen and Mattila-Wiro, 1996). Another significant cut of funding to some modalities occurred in 2015, mainly for political reasons.

The data reported by Finland to the OECD Peer Reviews also tells a tale of decreasing technical assistance, even over recent years (OECD 2007 and 2017). While the total bilateral Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and the funding to project-type interventions grew considerably in the second five year period shown, the expenditure on experts and other technical assistance shrunk – from a high of 180 mUSD in 2004 to only 26 mUSD in 2015 (Figure 3). However, it is noted that the MFA reports significant problems with both data quality and definitions, making it difficult to give accurate figures (personal correspondence).

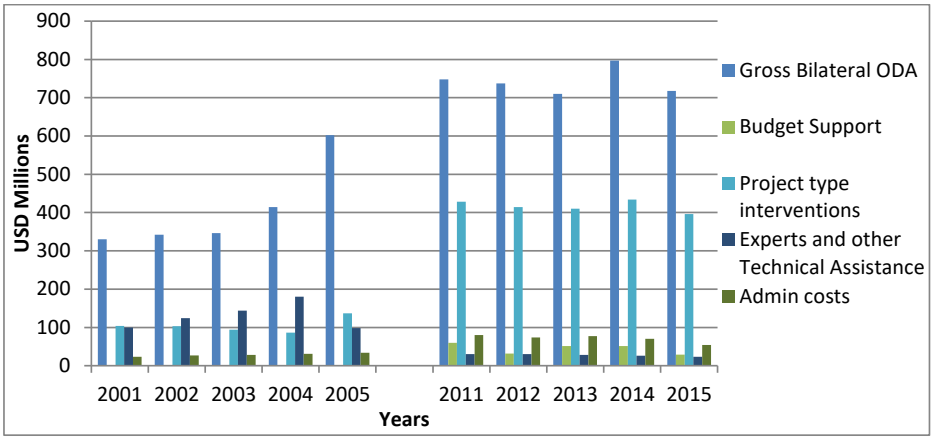

Figure 3. OECD Peer Review reported data on Finnish ODA

Over recent years there has been a significant variation in interests of the Ministers for Development Cooperation. Sectoral interests have moved over the decades from construction, engineering and electrification activities, to forestry and agriculture, and then to softer issues such as human rights and governance. The modalities have veered from budget support, to an emphasis on bilateral projects, to rapidly increasing and then decreasing support to NGOs, and recently to private sector instruments. There has also been a closer linkage to foreign policy and trade interests. These changes can be tracked by analysing the recent Finnish Development Policies (MFA Finland, 2016, 2012, 2007). The recent Results Report of the MFA (MFA 2018) tracks the changes in funding to different modalities, as well as some results. These reports, as with most documents from the MFA, do not consider the specific role of technical assistance in the roll out of these modalities. In fact, it is barely mentioned.

Likely motivations for Finland's development activities in recent years might include: the wish to be seen as a modern, outward looking nation; solidarity, political and foreign policy concerns (such as support to Nicaragua, Palestine, Ukraine and Afghanistan), particularly when aiming to work as part of the Nordic bloc, and later as part of the EU; and more instrumentalist aims (such as projects supported with an eye to gaining votes for Finland within the UN bodies, or efforts to decrease the flow of refugees). Both in policy and discourse of MFA staff, there is also a strong moral interest to reduce poverty and support development. There has been a clear move from more technologically-oriented towards more value-based aid – a modification in the developmentalist approach.

An evaluation of TA personnel from Nordic countries working in three African countries was carried out in 1988 (Forss et al, 1988). Looking at the approximately 900 Nordic TA (including Finns) at the time, it found that "65%

of TAP in our cases were implementers, 17% were controllers on behalf of the aid agencies, and only 11% and 7% were trainers and institution builders, respectively. This is far from the real and expressed needs of the recipient countries" (p.ii). The study argued that there were unnecessarily high numbers of international TA. Very few were women. It raised questions regarding the skills matching. Some TA not having relevant competencies to fill the professional gaps. Others were confined to administrative tasks, yet had a high cost. One incentive for recipient organisations requesting Nordic TA was that TA came with vehicles, equipment and running costs. Typical Finnish-funded projects of the 1980s were infrastructure activities, such as harbour construction or well drilling, or forestry training, plantation and dairy projects. They involved large Finnish technical teams and a top-down approach. Most of the Finnish TA were employed via consulting companies, rather than directly recruited and managed via FINNIDA, due to the lack of staff. The staffing of FINNIDA did not keep pace with the increase in development funding.

One of the key methods in Finland to provide TA is via consulting companies. I consider this in Article III specifically. In addition, the case study projects in Nepal are implemented by consulting companies. There is no clear description of consulting companies in the literature, and they remain generally invisible. A summary of the financial and administrative issues specifically related to consulting companies from an insiders' viewpoint (the author) is provided in Article III and some elements are summarised here.

The business model for most consulting companies is to maintain a permanent core staff, comprising of financial and administrative staff, technical or management experts, and a roster of temporary consultants. The technical staff are responsible for tendering, project management from the home office and backstopping missions to the field. At times they implement assignments themselves. Companies that have operated for many years usually have long-term employees and have strong knowledge of projects and MFA practices. This provides an element of institutional memory, often missing in the MFA, as commented by many of my MFA respondents (Article III). Studies of the donor development agencies (or development wings of Departments of Foreign Affairs) consistently point to the frequent rotations of staff and lack of institutional memory (eg. Ostrom et al 2001, Gould and Marcussen, 2004).

McGregor et al (2013) studied the similarly small New Zealand aid community. They found that as with Finland, there has traditionally been little distance between government, non-governmental and academic sectors. I considered also the consulting company staff and TA, and found that in many cases staff move between each group on the 'spectrum of development cooperation' (Article I and III). It is likely that this has both positive and negative results. The close relationship, and potential reliance for future work, may lead to self-censorship and toned down criticism (as in the 'octangle' of development cooperation, Figure 2). But staff from consultancy companies

and NGOs that move to the MFA Finland can bring a more realistic understanding of what is possible, and what the blockages are.

One example of the invisibility of consulting companies is that they are rarely represented in discussion panels on aid, or in the Finnish Development Policy Committee. The latter includes representatives of parliament, the MFA, CSOs, universities and the private sector (industry) bodies. Yet consulting companies, who play an important role in the development network or octangle, are not invited to participate. It is not clear why this significant source of information is ignored.

A clear difference exists between short-term inputs and long-term TA projects. For example, Mayer (2017) described the problems faced by short-term experts from the meteorological institutional cooperation projects (government to government). The TA can only make very brief visits to the partner country, and do not have the opportunity to understand local culture and to build relationships.

> "Another expert stated that it was impossible to figure out what the locals were really thinking. Getting past the phase of being polite for the sake of politeness seems to be a key challenge. To overcome it and create a mutual sense of trust, a lot of time, effort, interaction and presence at the local level as well as cultural expertise are needed. Unfortunately, these seem to be often lacking in the projects due to limited time and financial resources." (Mayer, 2017, p.163).

I can certainly identify with this from personal experience. My respondents greatly appreciated that many bilateral projects from Finland still involve some long term TA inputs, and often multiple phases.

A meta-analysis of Finnish development cooperation during the 1980s and early 1990s concluded that the modality of TA was problematic. It argued that the original rationale of gap-filling was no longer relevant, and they were expensive and not sustainable. However, it also noted that they were often effective and to some extent, indispensable. (Koponen and Mattila-Wiro, 1996, p.366). Over the intervening years, despite the decrease in size of project teams, the role of the TA remained important. The study of Finnish added value, carried out in 2012, found that "the importance of the individual human factor in development work needs to be recognised, and to enable it to work better, changes have to be made in the decision-making and management systems of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland" (Koponen et al, p.15).

Chambers (2017) described the high transaction costs and demotivation involved with competitive tendering and heavy reporting requirements in the UK, and the same comments could be made in Finland.

> "Competitive bidding… can make huge unremunerated demands on time. The monitoring and reporting requirements of the upward accountability procedures of logframes, RBM [Results-Based Management], PbR [Payment by Results], and their siblings, make heavy demands on staff time collecting and analysing data, filling in

> templates, and the like. And furthest out of sight are the costs and opportunity costs to people in communities – in providing information, responding to surveys, and most of all, and least recognized of all, not being facilitated and empowered to take action themselves. Funders are too far away to see, or perhaps even imagine, such benefits forgone" (Chambers, 2017, p.79)

When tendering for contracts, the consulting company responds to the terms of reference and specific requirements of TA. While in theory, objective scoring is used in evaluation of tenders, in practice there is always a subjective element. For instance, how much consideration is given to the history of the company or expert described on paper, versus what the evaluator has seen in reality? The company must then gamble on how strong they consider their technical tender is in comparison to the competition, and what price they should pick for the financial tender. Inevitably, these tendering costs (win or lose) must then be added to the overall cost of providing TA.

The fees the company can invoice per invoiceable working month are the only area of the budget where the consulting company can make a profit. The technical backstopping must be financed via the fees invoiced. The overhead of the company covers the administrative costs, the cost of advancing funds to the expert team for the assignment, quality control on reports, printing costs, storage of records and rent of their own office space, in addition to profit. While the costs to the donor sound high, especially when compared to the cost of living in some of the partner countries, or the salaries to recipient government staff, there is little profit after the running costs are paid (Article III).

The number of Finnish-funded projects is decreasing. In earlier decades (particularly the 1980s) the profits were much higher. Now the margins are tighter and the overheads are increasing. Many Finnish and foreign companies have moved out of development consulting due to insufficient profit and high risk. Others have decentralised their project management and tendering operations to countries where labour costs are cheaper (either to the recipient country or to third countries). This is problematic for the MFA, as staff usually appreciate the opportunity to discuss project issues in Finnish language, and prefer to have Finnish experts, who have links to Finnish institutes and culture. There have been various attempts made by the MFA Finland over recent years to pilot new tendering processes, however they have not been able to identify a suitable method to select the best TA11 (this was also discussed as a problem by respondents in Article III).

[11] For instance, a variety of negotiated processes have been trialled by the MFA, whereby the project is developed by the same persons who then tender for the implementation. This has had the problem that the experts need to balance what they consider would make a good project, alongside what they know the evaluators will want to see (especially the recipient government). Experience has shown that this was not a good solution, as the need to win the tender is likely to trump the aim to design the best project possible. In an effort to make the evaluation of the tendered CVs less subjective, the MFA has recently introduced a very complex process. For each TA, there are up to five 'references' or experiences provided under each element of the expertise required (such as team leader in a multi-year project, plus

As noted earlier, Junior Expert posts are an opportunity for young people to become involved in development work. This was discussed in Articles I and II. They may be included in the team for some short- and long-term consulting activities. They are recruited by the consulting company and have an opportunity to learn on the job alongside more experienced team members, and to gain experience in a developing country. However, moving from this level to the next post has proved difficult. As the size of project teams has decreased, there are fewer opportunities for Finnish experts. In the 1980s, some projects had up to 24 Finnish technical experts. In recent years projects have typically had only one International Team Leader and one Junior Expert. Without any middle level posts it is very difficult for Junior Experts with two years of project experience to continue, as they are not qualified to move to a Team Leader post. In addition, Finnish Embassy counsellor posts normally require field experience as well as Finnish nationality. As the senior experts reach retirement, this is a fundamental structural problem, which contributes to the dearth of long-term Finnish experts in Finnish development cooperation.

This is a reflection of the many purposes of development cooperation. It could be argued that if the purpose was purely developmentalist, there would be no need for Finnish expertise. In a realpolitik view of development, it must be recognised that there are also valid instrumentalist purposes. If the MFA is to have a cadre of staff with field experience in the future, Finnish TA plays an important role. This can be seen in the dilemma faced by students of development studies, who on the one hand struggle with the ethical issues of development, and on the other hand, are keen to be employed in the 'business' after graduation, whether as a researcher, NGO or consulting company staff, or in the bilateral or multilateral institutions.

3.5 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION SECTOR IN NEPAL

Bilateral Finnish-Nepali rural water supply and sanitation projects began in 1989 with the planning of the so-called 'Lumbini project', which ran from 1990 until 2006 over three phases (project documents and reports; Saarilehto, 2009; and Sharma, 1999). Earlier rural water and sanitation projects were

specific professional expertise, and expertise in monitoring, etc.), justifying why the person is the best for the assignment. However, as these are removed from the normal setting of a chronological CV, it is difficult to get a full picture of the person. It becomes a very technical assessment, ignoring the rounded human being. Yet in practice, these 'softer' attributes are often the thing that will make the difference regarding the ability of the TA to act as a 'translator', as discussed in the articles. In addition, as the company staff are usually the ones fill the CV format, it becomes an exercise in evaluating their writing skills, rather than the TA themselves. This was shown in a recent tender where the same expert was allowed to participate in two teams, and his CV received a different score in each! More discussion is needed on how to identify appropriate TA.

funded by Finland in Tanzania, Kenya and Sri Lanka in the 1980s and 90s. These had large teams of international and local technical experts, who designed and built the schemes and then handed them over to the government or communities. The projects were heavily engineering-focused and included considerable infrastructure and equipment inputs, such as rehabilitation of existing facilities and construction of new water systems (MFA 2001). The technical focus and insufficient ownership and capacity building led to difficulties with operation and maintenance. Consequently, a move to community management began.

At the start in Nepal, most of the construction was done by the project teams themselves. By 1995, the process had developed, based on lessons learned (and changing understanding of development management). Specifically, a district water supply and sanitation fund was established (supporting decentralized management), and funds and management control were channelled through water user committees. This was, at the time, a relatively new concept in Nepal (Sharma, 1999, ch.5). In addition, a gender strategy was introduced, extensive capacity building provided at community level, and a Step-By-Step process (SBS) established for water scheme planning and construction guidance.

During my research period there have been two on-going projects. The first, the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal, Phase II (RWSSP-WN) in Western Nepal, focuses on rural water supply and sanitation (www.rwsspwn.org.np). The first phase ran 2008–2013, the second phase 2013-2019. The project recently completed implementation. The stated purpose was to ensure the poorest and excluded households' rights to access safe and sustainable domestic water, good health and hygiene through a decentralized governance system.

The second project, the Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP) in the far and mid west region (Sudur Paschim and Karnali Provinces) of Nepal carries out rural development via a link to water resources management (www.rvwrmp.org.np). Water use here is considered to include a broader scope than water and sanitation, such as agriculture, cooperatives, renewable energy and irrigation. The project began in 2006, and Phase III will run until 2022. In Phase III, additional delegated funding has been provided by the European Union via Finland. The purpose is to achieve full coverage of water supply and sanitation, and to establish functional planning and implementation frameworks for all water uses.

The projects work in remote rural communities in Nepal, embedded in local government planning and management systems, but with international and Nepali technical assistance providing overall guidance. They are aligned with Nepalese national priorities. The projects are financed jointly by the governments of Nepal and Finland (and now the EU in the case of RVWRMP), and share costs with local government, communities and users. The projects work in 24 of the previous 75 districts of Nepal, which were transformed during the restructuring of local government in 2017 into a multitude of

smaller rural and urban municipalities. In 2019, the project TA worked with 50 municipalities of RWSSP-WN and 56 in the RVWRMP. The projects therefore 'going to scale', both geographically and over time (as compared to typically smaller and shorter NGO or UN interventions in the sector).

A significant point has been the large implementation budget contribution by the Government of Nepal to both projects, and the increasing contribution from local government. Even beneficiaries are voluntarily contributing more than anticipated. This indicates that they are satisfied with the implementation effectiveness, and not simply waiting to receive the funds through government channels. The TA costs, mainly covered by Finland, naturally make up a greater part of the budget than in projects implemented via government modalities. However, it is notable that the TA cost share of the budget decreases, and the project becomes more efficient as the project progresses and the systems are established (RWSSP-WN Completion Report).

The projects operate with an international team leader, who was, until late 2018, always Finnish, although this wasn't a requirement, and a Finnish junior expert. In RVWRMP there is also a second international post. The rest of the team are national staff, including senior experts who facilitate and coordinate the project activities, technicians at local level, as well as administrative and support staff. Some have a management and administration focus, and others provide technical expertise. Some of the Nepali staff have a long history working for the bilateral Finnish water projects, providing institutional memory. In RVWRMP there are seven staff directly employed by the Nepali public service to work with the project and one person employed by each of the 27 core municipalities, with joint donor & Nepali government funds.

The local facilitator staff - support persons (SPs) or organisations (SOs) - work and facilitate actions in the field and constitute the majority of project personnel[12]. They plan, organise, and supervise the implementation activities in the communities. Following the federalisation process, they are employed directly by the Rural Municipalities (with project funds from Finland/EU and Nepal). The local staff work on technical issues, such as design and supervision of construction of the water schemes. They also work on social issues with local communities: training, guiding and insisting on application of project modalities.

Both projects involve water governance and capacity building at local level. Water governance is fundamentally a local issue that involves a spectrum of stakeholders at various levels, including national and local government, environment authorities, land and water users, and community. Water security is closely interlinked with multiple issues, and these are reflected in the project activities. The availability of drinking water is the most critical aspect, as life depends on it. Women and girls in particular spend hours each day collecting potentially dirty water from far away springs and streams. Another link to water is malnutrition and food insecurity, which are still

[12] As of January 2020 there are 335 SO staff working directly on RVWRMP activities

evident in the remote areas of Nepal. Social, political, administrative and financial accountability are key areas for capacity building in local government and the support for water governance and sustainability. The role of the TA and project in supporting these issues is discussed in Article VI. In Rautanen and White (2018) the important role of the TA and capacity building for sustainability was also discussed. This was a case study of a successful community-based water provider that began in the Lumbini project days and is still operating successfully (scoring well nationally compared with other providers on almost every issue). We found that the good water governance principles were key, based on the initial step-by-step approach of the project.

Chambers (2006, 2018) and others, including Eyben, have talked about the importance of seeing beyond the capital city or the main road. "Shortage of time, the importance of the visitor, and the desire for information separately or together influence what is perceived." (Chambers, 2006, p.16) "The biases are *spatial* (main tarmac road, roadside, accessible from an urban centre…), *project* (special villages and places where there are projects, good things to show, contacts…..), *person* (males, elite, adults, government and NGO staff….), *seasonal* (during the dry season, not the rains…), *professional* (questions and curiosity limited to specialised professional mindsets and interests) and *diplomatic* (being tactful, not inquiring about sensitive subjects) and (an addition since the 1980s) *security* (confined to places considered safe, and limited to those accessible in daylight….)" (Chambers 2018). We can consider Chamber's 'biases' as follows, with regard to the two Nepal case studies in particular.

With regard to spatial and project biases, the Nepal case study projects are based in remote areas. By supporting local facilitators at village level, spatial bias is minimised. The TA are constantly monitoring both 'good' and 'bad' examples of cooperation, with regular field visits from the local base. The principal must trust the agent to carry out the project plans and broker the values as anticipated, as it is problematic for the representatives of the Governments of Nepal or Finland, or the Embassy, to maintain continual contact. This is accentuated in the case of the Nepalese government due to the new federal structure, loosening the chains of command even to the national government staff. In the case of TA based in capital cities, the link between principal and agent is closer, but there is a weaker link to the beneficiaries. Potential diplomatic biases are overcome to some extent by this close knowledge and relationship. For instance, by developing relationships via regular visits and the facilitators being based in the same village, sensitive subjects can be raised more easily. The case study projects have also focused beyond only professional issues, discussing both the technical and social fit of activities.

As for seasonal and security biases, in the case study projects the work continues year round, hence the TA team see a full picture of activities, though access may be limited in the rainy season. The earlier Finnish-funded water support to the 'Lumbini' project operated during the civil war in Nepal, despite

security issues. Maoist cadre audited the project books and processes and agreed that work could continue. Staff had strict instructions to maintain neutrality. Basic Operating Guidelines (agreed by most of the international donors) were applied strictly. By working at local level and maintaining an ethical reputation, the projects and their staff minimised security biases. Naturally that would not be feasible in countries with more serious risks. It is clear that development work internationally, as well as monitoring by principals, has been seriously impacted by conflict. In countries such as Afghanistan, monitoring is often reliant on trust.

The Finland-Nepal bilateral water projects (now including EU funding as well) are widely regarded as very good examples of development cooperation. Over more than thirty years of donor support, the modalities have been modified. Some of the same TA have worked throughout. Relationships between the different stakeholders have matured. It can be argued that this limits their use to provide examples of the role of TA. Offering an example of a poorly performing project might provide an interesting counterpoint and an opportunity to be more critical. However, I had strong access to these projects, and not to a poorly performing project in Nepal (other than limited access to the less successful first phase of RWSSP-WN). In Article IV, I do contrast the two projects, and the no-project or limited TA involvement scenarios. Providing a comparison to a project in another country would not be so valid.

What the project cases show is what TA can in certain circumstances achieve, not what it will always achieve, nor that TA is always necessary to achieve similar results. I don't believe that this would ever be possible to argue, given the extremely complex environment.

The case study projects provided the possibility to study the roles, motivations and experiences of the TA and staff. This included the following questions: How can donor development policies, such as gender equality and human rights, be translated into practice in different cultures by technical advisors? Should implementation of human rights be ignored if they conflict with traditional practices, such as menstruation taboos? Articles VI and VII considered the role of the projects in strengthening human rights and supporting the SDGs. Building capacities in the new municipalities and ensuring sustainable water supply were also considered.

It is notable that both of these projects have been the basis of considerable research, both by the author and by several other doctoral and masters students, Finnish, Nepali and others. Students have interviewed the staff, accompanied the project staff to the field, and received an introduction to the communities. Some have been outsiders from Finnish, Nepali and international universities; and some have been project staff themselves. For instance, both Rautanen (2017) and Haapala (2018) have been co-workers and co-researchers, and have provided valuable inputs for this study; as have several Nepali project staff who have completed or are working on doctoral theses. This has permitted ongoing interrogation of the meaning and role of the projects and their processes, and the role of the TA and relationships with

communities. In his thesis, Haapala came to similar conclusions as I did, emphasising the role of individual agency, even while interacting with institutions and processes. “At the grassroots level, one should focus on interactions, not only at the institutional, but also at the interpersonal level. The findings highlighted that the ways in which we understand formal and informal individual interactions define much of what governance is essentially about at the practical level.” (Haapala, 2018, p. 50)

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 METHODS USED

In Table 3 below I summarise the wide range of methodologies used for the different articles.

This study used a form of ethnographic case studies, as with some authors mentioned earlier (Mosse, 2004; Crewe and Harrison, 1998; and others). Ethnography is the study of social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organisations and communities. It aims to provide insights into people's views and actions, linked to their location of home or work and documenting their culture and views, through the collection of detailed observations and interviews. Traditionally in ethnography, the researcher was an independent and passive observer, spending long periods in the field (stereotypically, in a village) and working with a single case, or a small number of cases. In recent years researchers have become a part of the study via auto-ethnography, in which the researcher's own thoughts and perspectives from their interactions form part of the research, incorporating reflexivity - the 'ethnography from within' as described by Mosse (2005, p.11). I consider that this combination of insider and outsider role has brought insights that would otherwise not be available.

As the culture I am studying is the development aid culture, it could be said that I have been working 'in the field' for more than 30 years. I am looking at my own culture from the inside. The cases of the Nepal water projects can be considered to be illustrative, as they provide long-term situations with a variety of TA involvement (the dependent variable). I have been intensively working with these two projects in Nepal since 2010, with approximately three visits per year of 1-5 weeks at a time, and consider that this has given me extraordinary access and insights to both the project cases, and to my own culture as a development worker. Case studies from these projects formed the basis of many of the articles (Articles IV, V, VI and VII). The work also involved ethnography of Finns involved in development more broadly in Finland (Articles I, II and III).

Participant observation was a key element of my research with the advisers themselves, as well as the local stakeholders. Participant observation allows the researcher to observe and understand the participants in their natural world and understand their interpretations of it (Schutt, 2004). Although perhaps it is better described as being an 'observant participant', as suggested by Green (2011, p.38), where she is reflexively considering her own work as a development practitioner. This was an easy approach, as I am myself a practitioner. I was, at times, an active member of the TA team, and not only a passive observer.

My approach has some basis in grounded theory[13], as described by Glaser (1998). I collected data from the field, and following the analysis of that data and associated literature, a hypothesis gradually emerged. The hypothesis is not pure grounded theory, as I did not begin the research with a blank slate. I had good knowledge of the field environment, and as I do not come from a background of social studies, I was not confined to fixed theoretical ideas. Instead, I gradually found theories that appeared relevant for the world of development cooperation. The theory and topics gradually emerged, with each article.

I apply predominantly qualitative research methods. As described by Rautanen (2016), I identified the key groups and informants, aiming to gather a range of viewpoints within my overall field of technical development cooperation. I gathered information from a spectrum of informants, talking with women and men, different ages, castes, ethnicities, religions, education levels and abilities, in order to develop a broad perspective. The informants came from two main groups. The first was the cohort linked to the Nepal water projects, including people working as staff, the local NGOs contracted within the water projects in Nepal, and those they worked with, the villagers, local and national government staff, and Embassy staff. The second main group consisted of members of what I have referred to as the 'spectrum of development cooperation'. They included Finnish development studies students, researchers, NGO and consulting company staff, current and retired consultants, MFA Finland and multilateral donor staff. My respondents were mainly limited to Finns and Nepalese. I made this choice in order to limit the field somewhat. Otherwise the huge variation of development histories and systems from many countries would have complicated the analysis.

It could be claimed that my positioning was potentially problematic and a source of bias (as discussed also earlier, with regard to the academic-practitioner role). For instance, I am the representative of the employer of some of the respondents, co-worker of some, and in an agent's position versus principals when interviewing some MFA staff. In the case of the Finnish respondents, I do not think this was a significant issue, as there wasn't a significant power differential (though it is fair to say that there was an element of collegial loyalty, which might make me less critical of them). With the Nepalese respondents the positioning could be more problematic. It is possible that Nepalese respondents have altered their responses, leading to potentially unreliable results. If a Nepalese had written the case study articles alone, it would have been a different story from their viewpoint. Being a foreigner clearly gives me a different viewpoint from that of a Nepalese TA or other stakeholder. Working with other authors in the case studies, this gave an

[13] Grounded theory is a method for collecting data, identifying patterns through a concept-indicator model, and then constructing theoretical models based on these patterns. The aim is that the analyst should maintain an open mind, and avoid reading the literature in the area of study before writing the first draft of the emergent theory (eg. Glaser, 1998)

opportunity to triangulate viewpoints and reduce any bias. The validity of the research was also supported, by the use of multiple data sources, methodologies, types of respondents, and data treatment.

Literature review, beyond academic sources, included analysis of policies, strategies and guidelines from the MFA, project documents (available on-line and in the MFA archives; and from the projects and consulting company archives) and evaluation reports. In addition, data collection and analysis from other relevant sources was important, including OECD/DAC data and reports, financial reports of companies (available on-line) and Government of Nepal policies and strategies (available on-line or accessed through active participation in strategy development processes).

Online questionnaires were used for data collection with the Junior experts and JPOs, for Article I; with students for Article II; and with national staff in Nepal for Article V. I conducted follow-up interviews with some of the respondents. At times it can be difficult to get responses to questionnaires. For the questionnaires with project staff and with the JPOs, there was a good response rate, presumably reflecting their interest in the topic. For the students, it proved much more difficult to get responses, despite multiple visits in person to classes and re-sending the questionnaire. This probably reflects the low interest and competing priorities. However, in general as a methodological tool, I found the questionnaires gave valuable insights.

In Article I, the interviews were recorded and later transcribed, and the interviews and written questionnaires were coded (initially with nVivo, and later with Atlas.ti and Word/Excel). The approach I used for analysis was qualitative content analysis, discerning patterns and following the topics that were expressed. I found that the qualitative data analysis programs were time consuming and not so useful. I found that a more mechanical method of using coloured markers to code and sorting findings from the transcripts on Word or Excel suited me better. I used semi-structured interviews with most subsequent respondents, either taped and transcribed, or took written notes, particularly when in the field. Respondents were usually sent the general questions in advance. I also held group meetings with project staff, local government representatives and community members. In some of the work with staff, a SWOT analysis was conducted.

Table 3. Methodological framework

	Method and/or information source	Details	Article I – Spectrum of TA	Article II - Learning development	Article III – Unacknowledged companies	Article IV – Brokers	Article V – Bricoleurs	Article VI – Operationalising HR & SDGs	Article VII – Work with new municipalities in Nepal
literature	literature review	Projects' documentation				x	x	x	x
		MFA policies and reports, GoN policies, OECD reports, Evaluation reports, etc.			x	x	x	x	x
		Academic literature	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
methodology designs	case study design	Two ongoing project cases; one from past				x	x	x	x
observations	participatory observation, field survey / visits	Household, Water User Committee; community level						x	x
		Local & national level govt				x	x		x
		General interactions with development actors in Finland	x	x	x	x			
Interviews, discussions, questionnaires	informal discussion	community, water users				x	x	x	x
		project staff				x	x	x	x
		local government				x	x	x	x
		Finnish development actors	x	x	x	x	x		
	semi-structured interview	community members / local stakeholders / local government			x	x	x	x	x
		TA of different kinds/ company management	x	x	x	x	x		x
		MFA staff / managers			x	x			
		Multilateral staff	x		x				
	questionnaire	project staff	x				x		
		students and graduates		x					
		Junior experts & JPOs	x						

4.2 ACADEMIC OR PRACTITIONER, AND POSSIBLE BIASES?

Chambers (1983) talks about negative academics and positive practitioners, and highlights the dilemma: as an academic researcher, there is a tendency to take a critical position, looking at the problems rather than identifying solutions. As a practitioner you are in a position to provide something in return for the time and honesty of the interviewees. It is difficult to sustain a long-term observant participant or researcher role, without making some sort of practical contribution to the participants themselves, otherwise you expect them to donate their time for your own benefit. Whether it is ultimately the right solution to combine the roles is not always easy to say. Mikkelsen (2005) also refers to the challenge of combining these two roles. On the other hand, practitioners may be considered by some to have a positive bias, while researchers are thought to be more neutral. Mosse (2006, 2011) also described the difficulties in setting boundaries between field relationships and research.

It is difficult to hold both roles, acting as an insider-outsider. I have been criticised by some in academia, for not being sufficiently critical of my subject matter. I have tried to pay attention to my personal biases, which have shifted over the years. However, I consider that the disadvantages are outweighed by my personal, first-hand experiences, having worked in many roles of development cooperation, both in the home office and in the field. These experiences have given me better access to people working at all levels of development cooperation, from field level to Finland and globally, than most researchers have.

Being a foreigner, though now a naturalised Finn, and studying the Finnish development cooperation scene is another insider-outsider role I have played. I am viewing some behaviours and values from a different cultural viewpoint, though as noted earlier, I feel that I share most of the 'Finnish' values.

The reaction of others on the 'spectrum of technical cooperation' has been generally positive. In the first paper, as well as my earlier research on the Finnish Junior Experts, and on Junior Professional Officers, the respondents were generally pleased that someone from a similar background (long term volunteer and NGO worker as well as consultant) was interested in their experience. Being an insider made it easy for them to confide in me. Although I assumed that some from academic, NGO or government roles might be suspicious, given my employment as a consultant, those interviewed were positive and shared their views. Several staff from the MFA Finland did not want to be interviewed. It is possible that some of them did so due to my position.

As noted by Mosse (2005), Gibson et al (2005), Yanguas (2018) and others, there is a tendency for all the actors within the development business to avoid being totally candid regarding their work. This is partly reflecting a natural tendency to think about the next assignment or grant. The mantra of the entrepreneurial world - 'fail early and fail often' - is simply not possible in

development. This limited candidness is also a reflection of the extreme complexity and sensitivity of the issue. No development case can be simply described without the in-depth background of the actors and drivers. Yet busy government staff need relatively simple explanations for their political masters. The media are ready to publicise any critical take on development cooperation, with a focus on waste, corruption and greed. This makes most working in development anxious about criticism. In addition, the results of relationships between TA and local partners and communities are not measured, nor unexpected outcomes that are not planned in the logframe. These aspects are a loss to our understanding of development.

While many people working in development will sound off over a drink, most consider it unethical and unfair to talk openly about the challenges we all face. We soldier on, dealing with difficulties and trying to achieve the best result under the circumstances. As commented by one of my respondents (Article II), development cooperation is "so ideological that you can't have proper discussions about it and you feel like you have to defend it. That's the problem – it is so polarised. If you are within development, depending on what camp you are in, if you are consultant you have to defend yourself against the NGOs, and in the UN, likewise." Experience shows that shades of grey are not well dealt with in the media when it comes to discussions of spending taxpayers' money on aid.

In some ways, the situation was less problematic for me as I focused more on development practitioners, rather than local community members in most of the research. I had a more equal relationship, and there was less likelihood of expectation of a benefit to the interviewee. With the Finnish respondents, I came from a similar cultural and economic background. I share many of the same interests, background and prejudices – the same habitus. I am a member of one part of Aidland.

Another limitation was that I am an insider to the consulting company I work for, and persons I work with. While this gives me considerable access to both positive and negative cases of technical assistance, I tend to self-censor when it comes to publicising problem cases. In practice, there could be legal repercussions were I to publicise some issues. If I were I to be totally candid regarding some practices and behaviours of persons at all points of the development octangle, I would face considerable fall-out and could hurt others. This was experienced by Mosse. After his major field work was published, his co-workers and DfID staff made official complaints (Mosse, 2006, 2011). I consider this to be inappropriate. In particular, in the field it is important to remember that I, as a privileged foreigner, can always leave, while local persons will need to stay and deal with any fallout.

This also raises issues of how well I can really know the lives of the people in the communities that have studied. My life is totally different from that of the women living in villages and working with the project, even from the Nepali male staff. For them I am clearly an outsider, though perhaps less so than some international researchers who visit the country only for short

research stints. The insider-outsider perspective is discussed in Article IV. Local staff are often outsiders also, coming from different locations, caste, professional backgrounds, and they are usually men. I recognise my 'frame' (Devereux 2010, Kaplan 1999) or viewpoint as a white, western, privileged and educated woman. I will always be an outsider and can never hope to really know the lives of my collaborators and research subjects in developing countries. However, I try to recognise and reflect on my experiences and keep an open mind. Subjectivity is impossible to avoid, as we all a result of our experiences, group membership, and cultural background. Maintaining objectivity in qualitative research is something that all researchers need to consider, whether they are an insider or an outsider. Everyone has different insider or outsider status, in relation to those around them. That status is not static, and can change even in interactions with the same people. (Naaeke et al, 2011). The changing perspective was also seen in Articles IV and V, where the project staff talked of sometimes receiving policies and guidance from 'above', and on other occasions dealing with those 'below'.

In retrospect, learning Nepali language intensively at the start would have been useful. Having to work through interpreters, usually project staff, at village level also separates me from some of the respondents. This runs the risk of filtering the responses. However, in years of field work in different countries I have learned to combine my, at times, minimal language skills with body language, and I can strike up good relationships with local women in particular. This helps to overcome the language barrier. I can usually tell if the communication is going astray (though of course, you never know). In many other countries I can communicate directly with local community members in their first language (eg. in Latin America, in Spanish), however, easy verbal communication is not always the most important issue. The project staff and most of the government and local NGO staff I dealt with in Nepal spoke at least fair English. Communication with local residents and beneficiaries was more problematic and usually required an interpreter from the project teams. I was able to at least observe the relationships with local communities and confirm the messages from interpreters. More importantly, as the focus of my research was the staff, not the community members, I felt that this was not a serious problem.

4.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I informed the participants in the interviews and questionnaires that I was conducting the interviews as part of my doctoral research. They gave verbal permission at the start of the interviews to participate in the research. Names and positions were anonymised to protect their identities. In only a couple of rare cases were the names published as part of an article. In those cases, the

participants were specifically asked for permission. I do not consider that there were ethical difficulties for the individuals involved.

As an insider-researcher, the situation was complicated. Some of the persons interviewed in the Nepal case studies were employees of the project where I work (Articles IV and V). There was a risk that my colleagues might feel obliged to cooperate with my research. However, I was not their direct manager, and this potential risk did not appear to matter to our respondents. I was also able to have a relationship as a friend and colleague. In all the Nepal-based articles my role as a representative of the consulting company might potentially have influenced the responses of some persons. My experience was that they were mainly enthusiastic participants, appreciating the opportunity to tell their stories. We had a good relationship and I think that they felt able to open up to me without concerns of repercussions. No-one was pressured to participate in the research if they chose not to (and some did). The same was true of almost all respondents. The interviews were a chance to talk about themselves. I found that most people enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on their life and work.

In addition, there was a risk that when I made observations of normal project activities, project staff or community members might not have been necessarily aware that they were being researched. I do not believe that I crossed any ethical barriers.

Most of the documents from projects were publicly available in the MFA's archive. Some internal documents and reports were accessed in my role as project manager or worker within the projects in Nepal. None of these were sensitive in nature. Some information was obtained from carrying out the MFA's Evaluation of Junior Professional Officer programme. I only used information from the evaluation that was already published, or that came from my own earlier research.

In both evaluation and research, there is a risk when interviewing members of the broader community or local government that they may think that their responses could lead to additional financial or technical support. This is one reason why it is so difficult to get a true control group in evaluations. It is important to not raise any false expectations. Honesty in responses must also be considered. Respondents do not always tell the truth, and it is important not to fall into the trap of thinking there is an idealised community, prepared to expose all their opinions and feelings to a stranger who arrives and asks questions. This is particularly so when discussing difficult issues of values and taboos. Triangulation is vital, and finding a position between trust and open enquiry, and scepticism. Observation is also useful for this (for instance, when staying overnight in villages). This is also a situation where a long term involvement was useful, rather than parachuting in and out (as with participants in monitoring or evaluation visits, or purely researchers).

As noted above, when interviewing Finns involved in international development, there was little power differential. My respondents were usually enthusiastic participants. In all the interviews, my subjects were protected. I

minimised any risk of harming them or exposing them to external criticism. I applied the basic principle of "First, do no harm" to my research and work, and considered this to be more important than the results of my research. As noted above, I considered it would be unethical to publish some sensitive insider information, while stressing that this does not imply that the persons I deal with have broken ethical rules or been involved in corruption. Since in social sciences research, the direct benefits to the subjects are minimal, it is important to protect them from harm. For this reason, I did not publish their identities. I changed names and any identifying information, and always considered their personal safety. I ensured that the subjects knew why I was interviewing them, and what the information would be used for (informed consent). I refrained from asking potentially controversial questions in public (much as in normal project work). I built trust with the subjects, and if needed, the interpreter, before touching on sensitive issues. I did not ask delicate questions if it was clear that they would cause embarrassment. I tried not to cause undue disturbance in the lives of my subjects. For instance, I considered their workload and timetable and tried to minimise the interference with their normal responsibilities.

Honesty in interpretation is complicated – it would be quite easy to consider only corroborating evidence and articles, and minimise the importance of opposing views. In social sciences we mainly consider the opinions of others when reviewing literature and it is tempting to set them aside if they don't coincide with our own. The simple existence of many views that oppose mine does not mean that they are right and I am wrong. I try to acknowledge that there are other opinions.

5 RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

5.1 OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS IN THE ARTICLES

The overall question addressed in the articles is: What is the role, motivations and contribution of individuals and organisations in development cooperation?

In my research I considered the following research questions:

a. What are the roles and motivations of individuals and the consulting companies working in development cooperation?
b. What contribution can (or should?) these individuals and companies make to translating norms, regulatory frameworks and values into practice in complex operating environments?
c. What is the role of technical assistance in sustainable and equitable water governance in Nepal?

These questions could be summarised in Figure 4 below – with question b, also incorporating the issues of a., and question c. based on the topics raised in questions a. and b.

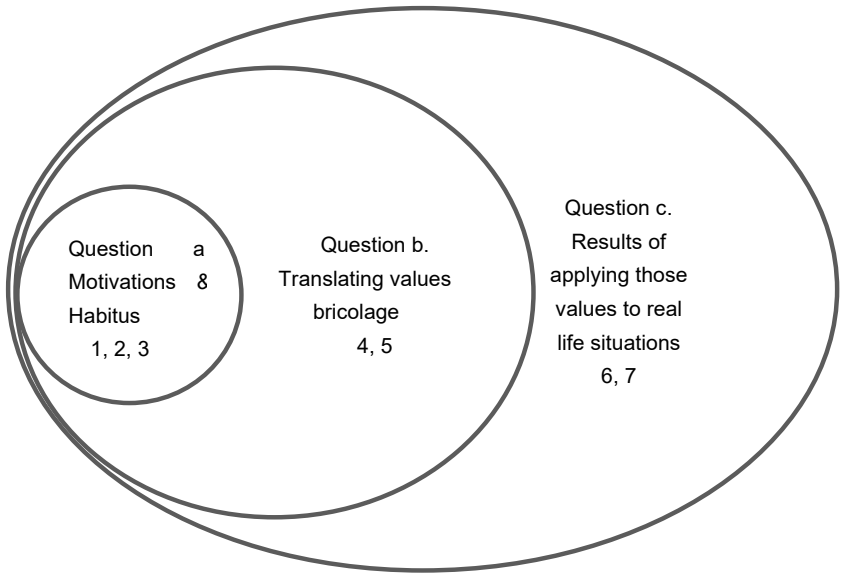

Figure 4. Summary of research questions

Source: Author

I will summarise below the findings with regard to these questions, from the research and published articles.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS FROM EACH ARTICLE

a) What are the roles and motivations of individuals and the consulting companies working in development cooperation?

The Spectrum of Motivations, Expectations and Attitudes in Technical Development Cooperation

ARTICLE I – White, P. 2015. 'The Spectrum of Motivations, Expectations and Attitudes in Technical Development Cooperation'. *Forum for Development Studies*, Volume 42, Issue 1, January 2015, pp 89-112. DOI: 10.1080/08039410.2014.997790

In the first article I designed a figure (see Figure 5 below) representing the spectrum of technical development cooperation. Traditionally, many have assumed that altruism is the main motivation for those on the NGO and volunteering side, whereas more selfish motivations of career, salary and professional development are considered to motivate those on the right. The study explored this assumption – is there a clear difference in motivation according to the role held?

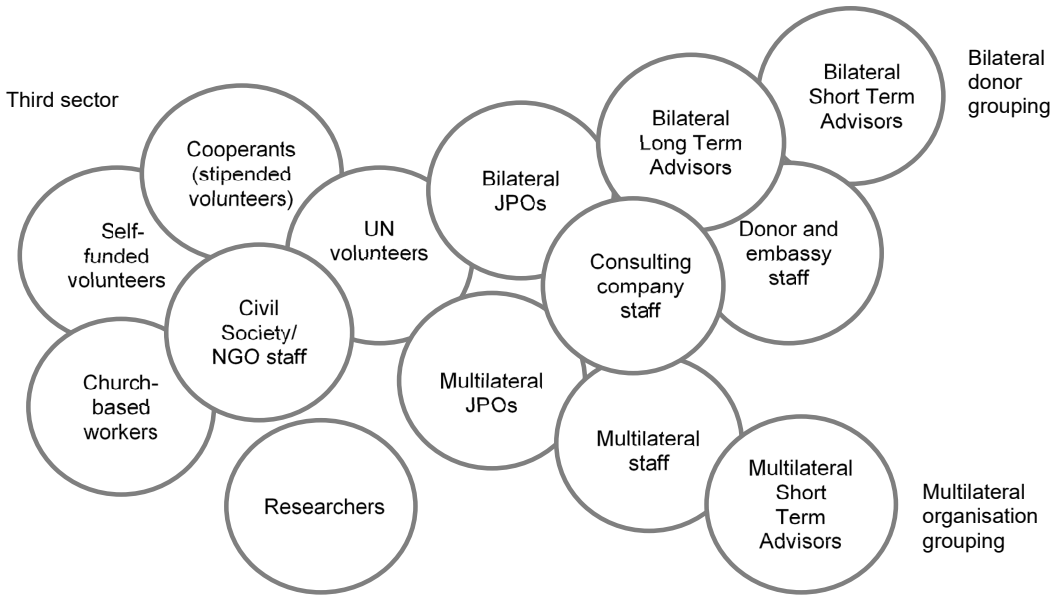

Figure 5. Spectrum of technical development cooperation

I examined the motivations and experiences of persons working in different technical cooperation roles within international development cooperation, analysing how they differ, yet contain a common thread. The study consisted of interviews and a questionnaire directed to volunteers, NGO staff, junior professional officers, technical advisors, researchers and donor staff – as well as personal reflections.

I reviewed the literature from the aidnography genre, studying many types of aid workers, including Mosse (2005); Eyben (2008); Vaux (2001); Eriksson Baaz (2005); de Jong (2011); Watts (2002); Devereux (2010); Smith and Laurie (2011); and Stirrat (2008). I also considered the literature on motivations and gift theory, including binary positions applied to development work, such as work/career–volunteer; selfish–altruistic motivations (such as Silk, 2004; Fechter, 2011; Göbel et al, 2013; and Shutt, 2012).

An element of altruism was common for many of the respondents[14], but the older respondents were more likely to talk about it, while career imperatives appeared to be more important for the younger cohort. I also recognised that times have changed – the younger generation have a different vocabulary regarding development work, and greater job pressures. I found considerable fluidity of movement of individuals between the categories of technical

[14] An unpublished survey of mainly Italian development workers from a wide range of modalities (Gritti, 2014), found very similar results to my Finnish respondents. Altruism and a search for adventure were also the main motivations.

cooperation. Regardless of their starting point, the respondents had a tendency to stay in development throughout their career if they could. In contrast to younger respondents, many older interviewees felt that they had not planned a career in development but simply ended up there. In subsequent assignments, the extremes of lifestyle are less shocking. The work is familiar and the risks less jarring. Development work becomes 'what I do'. I did recognise that the sample of persons interviewed had the potential to influence the result.

I found that the culture of technical development cooperation influences the individuals working in the spectrum of roles in development. Individuals tend to self-identify with their own group, such as NGO staff or donors, but also with the broader development culture or habitus (as discussed by Desmond, 2007 and others). Work in the field of international development moulds participants socially and organisationally, giving a shared vocabulary and ethical viewpoint. Working in a project in a developing country, away from friends and family, tends to lead to overlapping of social and work life. Many note the close bonds they have formed with co-workers and the difficulty of explaining the work to outsiders beyond clichés. The financial benefits make the work worthwhile for some, but for most this is a background issue rather the main driver to choose this work over another. Undoubtedly, there are stresses and dangers, but for most the good seems to outweigh the bad for most.

'Learning' development

ARTICLE II – White, P. and Devereux, P. 2018. "Learning' Development' *Forum for Development Studies. 45(1):119-141 DOI: 10.1080/08039410.2017.1393458*

In the second article I looked at the students studying for a career in development. In the previous article I had found a difference in motivations and expectations between early and mid-late career Finnish development workers. This led me to want to find out more. There has not apparently been any study of motivations of development workers at the point of starting their studies.

International Development Studies courses are a relatively new phenomenon. Earlier, people entered the field with technical backgrounds and learnt on the job. Similarly, many took the road from long-term international volunteering or Junior Expert/ Junior Professional Officer posts, and moved into a career in international development (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011; Baillie Smith, 2013: Devereux, 2008). More recently, development studies courses have emerged (Roth, 2012). The article asked whether these courses find the right balance between critical approaches, history and vocational skills?

This article looked at motivations and pathways for working in international development and creating the space for motivating and achieving better development practice and practitioners. Using questionnaires and interviews, the study investigated the motivations and attitudes of Finnish students of development studies, as well as alumni and their career paths. The study asked what motivated the respondents to choose the course of studies, their perceptions of the career and whether their motivations changed during the course and after exposure to development work in the field.

The article acknowledged the range of motivations and experience of those engaged with international development and considered the tension between critical theory and vocational skills (Woolcock, 2007; Denskus and Esser, 2015). Competencies for development practice encompass a combination of theoretical knowledge, technical skills, administrative knowhow and attitudinal factors (Melber, 2014; Mobjork, 2010). The students and alumni surveyed in this article, stressed the need for 'vocational' skills in order to give them a possibility for work in the field. It is important to consider how young entrants can get a start, with increasing competition in a narrowing market. Linking development studies to the drive to achieve the SDGs at home, as well as tackling global challenges such as climate change, could also be a useful focus (Currie-Alder, 2016; Buch-Hansen and Lauridsen, 2012). The article concludes that co-production, combining academic courses and research, including reflective and experiential practice, could be a positive step forward.

'Bastard children' - consulting companies in development cooperation

ARTICLE III – White, P., 2020. ''Bastard children' – Unacknowledged consulting companies in development cooperation'. *International Development Planning Review*. 42(2): 219-240.

In the third article, I looked at the development consulting companies, one of the major modalities for development. Development consulting companies are pivotal actors in bilateral projects, yet they are largely invisible in policy documents, and little researched. The title of this article came from a quotation of one respondent: 'Consultants are the bastard children of development – no one wants to acknowledge them!'

The article begins with a description of the history and current status of the Finnish development consulting scene, demonstrating the growing difficulties of profitability. It then considers the influences on the behaviours of consulting companies and their positions within social networks in Finland and developing countries, which may shape whether or not they behave as expected by the client. I investigate: what is the role of development consulting companies? How does it differ from standard private sector operations at home or abroad? Is it ethically appropriate to make money from poverty

reduction – and is it even financially viable? Why are consultancy companies needed in development cooperation?

Literature was difficult to identify as so few researchers have considered the private consulting companies. Some of the relevant literature reviewed included Aßländer et al, 2016; Forss et al 1988; Koponen, 2005; Chambers 2017; Ostrom et al 2001; and Yanguas, 2018.

As noted earlier, this topic was of particular interest to me, having moved through the spectrum of development roles. I, like many in the development sector, initially had looked on consulting companies with a jaundiced view. My first contacts were from the 1980s, which were the heyday of Finnish development companies. Back then the project teams were large, and acted in a fairly top down and instrumentalist manner. The margins were high and they were tied to Finnish equipment and experts. Looking at both the history and the current practices, I found that times have changed. The technical assistance segment of the ODA budget in Finland is shrinking. Although often judged by the earlier years of high returns and questionable effectiveness, it is clear that this is no longer a high profit business. Increasing demands and overheads have diminished the profits. Few TA are employed on permanent contracts any more – the 'gig economy' has extended to the development industry. Looking at the financial results of the consulting companies, and the dramatically decreasing number of firms involved, it is fair to assume that it is a dying business. Only a few companies remain interested in development, with incentives ranging from money, capacity building and varying interest in altruism. At the same time, the MFA Finland staff bemoan the lack of Finnish long-term experts (and the consequent lack of persons with field experience who can move to the MFA ranks). This is a natural result of the decline in Finnish projects and opportunities to breach the step up from junior posts to Chief Technical Advisor.

Their business model of consulting companies is a combination of altruism and profit. They are located between 'doing good' (often considered to be the role of NGOs or UN organisations), and the profit motivation of typical private sector companies. However, they are constrained by the specifications of the donor and partner organisation, which leave limited space to act independently and to go beyond the project document or to 'do good' beyond the minimum. The recent discussion of more flexible approaches such as Doing Development Differently (Booth and Unsworth, 2014; Yanguas, 2018; Dasandi et al, 2019), clashes with the increasing control and Value for Money approaches from donors.

Consulting companies play a pivotal role in bilateral cooperation, at least in the setting of the two case study projects in Nepal (though this is not always the case), as the only actor dealing with all parties. UN organisations and Finnish NGOs usually do not operate at local level directly through their own staff, but partner with local level NGOs to facilitate their work in communities (church-based NGOs being an exception). UN organisations tend to focus on policy level work. While the two case study projects also sub-contract local

NGOs, they also have TA working at local level and therefore are in contact with all parties. As noted above, some INGOs also work at local level, but in these cases they are usually comparable to consulting companies and bilateral projects in their working practices and cost.

With the overhead on the experts being their only income, companies are highly reliant on the donor. Donors strictly apply restrictive practices, which reflect principal-agent theory, in contrast to the more trusting approach applied towards NGOs and multilaterals, despite common values and ends. Tendering processes are inadequate for finding the ideal TA – this can result in companies or TA that are good at tendering but bad at implementing projects. The dramatic decrease in technical assistance budgets over recent years, along with increasing bureaucracy, has caused profits to diminish and many companies have disappeared, taking institutional memory with them. If the donors wish to maintain some institutional memory, assert some policy guidance and have a direct contact with work on the ground in developing countries, consulting companies and their staff can play an important role.

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b) What contribution can (or should?) these individuals and companies make to facilitating norms, regulatory frameworks and values into practice in complex operating environments?

I worked with two articles considering the technical advisors working in bilateral projects in Nepal. The first article focused on the connection between the donors, policies, local government and communities, and the role of the technical experts in brokering or translating values and policies to implementation.

The second article of the pair was set in the same two projects, but focused more closely at the experience in the field. This involved the local staff (Nepali technical experts, but also the community level facilitators), and their efforts to find culturally appropriate ways to implement the project norms and values.

Scott (2008) describes regulatory processes as being characterised by regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements. International and national TA play a role both of top-down agents of regulatory governance, and of bottom-up problem solving and adjustments. In both cases, the TA is an active agent, responding to the needs and situation at hand rather than only applying the rules. “Functional contingent interactions are required to make successful decisions and prioritisations and to take responsibility in situations where governance support and guidelines fall short” (Haapala, 2018, p.46). The TA are in a pivotal role, translating the policies to the grassroots and feeding back information. One respondent, described her earlier work for the MFA in Article IV: ‘there is quite a lot of time and energy spent on policies and country strategies. It is quite an important part of the work, but I think it is

kind of high level. You can read them and they are so generic so they fit anything. It communicates Finnish values. But they can be implemented in so many ways." The individual TA need to interpret those policies and tools into practice. Hinton and Groves (2004) came to a similar conclusion on the importance of individual agency within complex systems, given the power of the individual to alter the function of the wider system (p.16).

The formal institutions of projects include the international agreements, policies, guidelines, project document, audits and the culture of the project management. The expected manner in which policies are put into action in projects, are described via project documents. Traditionally logical frameworks have presented a relatively simple pathway from activities and means, to results, objectives and purpose. While there may be assumptions mentioned at each level, unless it was a 'killer assumption', it is assumed that things would progress smoothly However, even with the introduction of theories of change, which entertain the idea of a messier, more complex project environment, it is still expected that the objectives can be reached via a knowable path (Fforde, 2018). However, with my practitioner hat on, I can understand the wish for a simplified view of the project activities, and some pre-established indicators to measure progress. Despite recent moves for Doing Development Differently, and Thinking and Working Politically, these don't yet have clear indications of success (Dasandi et al, 2019).

A critical argument can be made that the guidelines and practices should not be translated to local level at all, however in the setting of development cooperation, this decision is taken at a higher level. However, an important aspect is the way bottom-up learning, transmitted via interpersonal relationships, can be used to modify the guidelines and policies (for instance, the author has participated in working sessions with MFA staff, to prepare new policies and country strategies, and to define indicators, all based on learning from the field).

Both articles note the important role that individual attitudes, behaviours and motivations play – the cultural–cognitive elements within Scott's description of institutional development (Scott, 2008). For instance, both the international and national staff need to interpret the unwritten values of the projects, such as transparency or moral standards, when confronted with challenges on their own. The majority of the local TA are men from 'advantaged' castes, outsiders to the community. All the internationals are outsiders, but all were motivated by a strong desire to improve local wellbeing and livelihoods, despite the difficult living conditions. A clear outcome of the highly motivated TA building the skills and confidence of the community is that there are more local contributions, and the work proceeds more smoothly and rapidly than in government infrastructure development.

They also note the role of the group ethos in these projects. For instance, in RVWRMP, the staff regularly refer to the 'RV family' – both in personal communications and in public. This combination of long-term relationships, dealing with issues together under adverse circumstances, and positive

reinforcement via social interactions, helps build a habitus. In turn, this helps the staff in their work with communities and reinforces the values. Haapala and Keskinen (2018) also investigated the way in which the project personnel transformed the externally imposed policy discourses into an internal, operative project discourse hierarchy, and came to a similar conclusion regarding "the importance of actual practices, individual capabilities, and intersubjective interactions for the implementation of development. Institutions can be organised in several ways, but they remain empty without people occupying them" (Haapala & Keskinen, 2018, p. 48). Doty (2016) also noted the importance of the individual behaviours of the RVWRMP project staff themselves to emphasise transparency, local knowledge and contacts, participatory processes, gender and social inclusion and local ownership.

Technical Advisors as Brokers: Translating gender equality and human rights policies and values into practice in the water sector in Nepal

ARTICLE IV – White, P. and Haapala, J. 2019. 'Technical Advisors as Brokers: Translating gender equality and human rights policies and values into practice in the water sector in Nepal', *European Journal of Development Research*, Vol. 31, Iss. 3, (Jul 2019): 643-662. DOI:10.1057/s41287-018-0173-0

The MFA dedicates considerable time and effort to shaping value statements and development policies, and funding is provided with the assumption that these will be applied. Yet it is unclear how this is to happen without project staff, who have the explicit role to find a logical fit in practice, in quite different cultural settings. In other modalities, there isn't a clear theory of change, but rather, a degree of wishful thinking. We consider bilateral projects and the staff that work in them, to be a potential conduit for value change and sustainable development.

We asked: should the values and cultural norms of the most powerful members of the local community prevail, even if this limits the human rights of the disadvantaged and maintains the status quo? Or is it valid for a project, in the hands of TA, to take a stand and implement development policy? Interviews with a range of donor (MFA Finland), Government of Nepal, international and local experts, and community members, discussed the always-sensitive issue of whose values count – those of the donor, Nepalese Government, local participants or the advisors? Respondents regularly raised examples of individuals at all levels who either facilitate or block change. They also noted how local or international TA who behaves in an arrogant manner or insists on foreign ideas without adequate translation to the local setting, may have a negative impact.

The article considered the way in which TA must respect the intentions and regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive frameworks of the donor and

recipient governments. At the same time they must respect the local cultures and realities of the local governments and villagers they work with. This is can be a tricky balance as they promote value change in support of gender equality and human rights.

We considered that the international and local persons providing technical assistance in the project play varying roles of 'brokering', 'translating' and 'facilitating bricolage'. We discussed the research of some researchers who have described the role of TA in translating policy to practice (eg. Mosse, 2005; Olivier de Sardan, 2005; Gibson et al, 2005; Mayer, 2017). Brokers can be considered to be bridges or intermediaries of knowledge, ideas and practices. This can include top-down or bottom-up simple transfers, or more nuanced development of capacities in a local setting and relationship building. Brokers can also be local community members or development workers. We note that human rights researchers have pointed to the difficulties for local duty bearers to ensure the right to water and sanitation, in this case, without capacity building and translation of ideas into local practices (Meier et al, 2014). This was demonstrated in the article, for instance, when describing attempts at behaviour change regarding the menstruation taboos.

We found that, in contrast to the no-project or limited TA involvement scenarios, long-term TA involvement supported the ability of disadvantaged or disenfranchised members of communities to claim their rights. This leads to interesting reflections on the competing positions of ownership, democratic decision making and power. Project modalities have often been criticised for not creating real change, but instead just providing inputs of technical advice or goods for a limited period in a limited area. In this case study, the TA also play a role of value translation and social mobilisation, aiming for fundamental change in the community. We found that the modality of technical assistance, and the individuals working as TA, have an indispensable role in facilitating sustainable, equitable, and inclusive rural development outcomes in socio-culturally difficult operational environments.

Development through bricoleurs: Portraying local personnel's role in implementation of water resources development in rural Nepal

ARTICLE V – Haapala, J. and White, P. 2018. 'Development through Bricoleurs: Portraying Local Personnel's Role in Implementation of Water Resources Development in Rural Nepal'. *Water Alternatives* 11(3): 979-998

The second article responding to this question had the novelty of focusing on Nepali technical assistance at the grassroots operational level. This is not an area that has received much attention earlier. The study describes the challenges the implementing staff encounter in relation to the steering policies, project modalities, local communities and partners in government

administration. We used questionnaires with the local staff and focus groups to discuss their personal motivations and the challenges they face in their day-to-day work. The study bridged actor-oriented anthropology with the adaptive management and critical institutional literature.

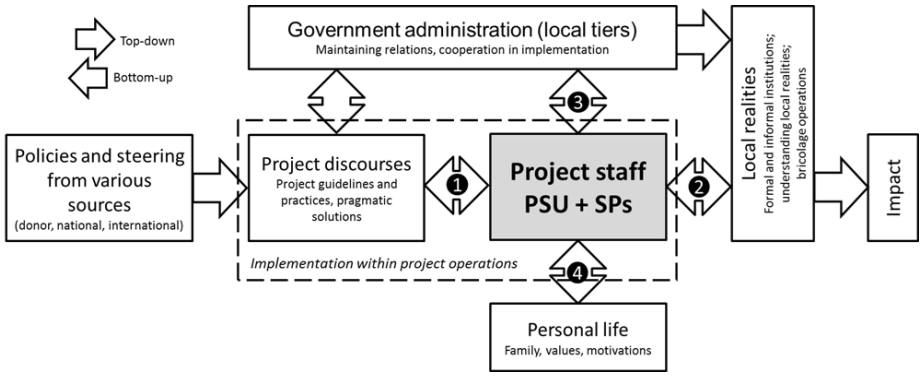

Figure 6. Project from personnel's viewpoint: Interactions between staff within the project, their own motivations, influences from outside and their relationships with the community.

Figure 6 above (taken from the article) shows the project structure and links with different actors, and the ways that we perceived the staff members' links to project discourses, local realities, government administration and personal life. We interrogated the ways in which the implementing individuals must collaborate with their partners and facilitate the planned changes in local institutions and individual behaviours – particularly considering the work on bricolage of Cleaver (2002; 2012); Merrey and Cook (2012); Cleaver and de Koning (2015); and Funder and Marani (2015). The findings indicate that much of the implementation process at the grassroots is determined by informal, improvised, and fuzzy institutional surroundings. These are quite different to designed or regulated governance environs. This contrast was particularly important, given the weak institutional setting at that time and place in Nepal (prior to the local elections). The staff take the project guidelines and norms and tweak them to get a pragmatic local fit. The personal motivations and the ability of the staff to operate effectively in less-regulated environs determines many of the implementation outcomes at the grassroots. For instance, when surveyed, the TA considered that enthusiasm for the work and a wish to 'do good' was the most important characteristic for a member of the project personnel. This allowed staff to put up with difficult living and working conditions. Apart from obvious individual incentives, such as the salary, the motivating factors that resulted in lasting enthusiasm for work could be divided into altruistic motivations and opportunity incentives. There was a clear sense of pride to be working for these projects, which had a good reputation in the community.

The top responses regarding motivations were: To develop or modernise poorer communities; To get a good job / earn a good salary and support my family; I want to work for a project that has a good image in the community; To ensure basic needs and human rights for all; and Because I have the capabilities to do a good job in this field.

The study found that caste and gender influenced the treatment of the staff in the local social networks and also the staff's own behaviours. The norms and guidelines of the project were useful for reinforcing institutional policies, supporting and guiding local staff, and not allowing 'too much' bricolage.

When considering institutional elements, the findings indicated that the project staff used regulative and normative tools less than the cultural-cognitive elements at the grassroots. The study showed that the TA were opportunistic improvisers, as well as negotiators, working within the dynamic and complex power relations at multiple levels. It was evident that the cultural environs, power relations, skills and knowledge, past experiences, different world views, and individual concerns shaped the interactions and individuals' choices in practice, rather than only rational choice, norms or regulations. This reflected our view that the interaction of the operating environment with the local socio-cultural environs was characterised by institutional bricolage, rather than regulative or normative governance institutions. In other words, the project document and guidelines were less important in the field that the adaptations and good fit found locally (quite reflective of the literature discussed in earlier chapters regarding brokerage, translation and bricolage). The findings highlighted the importance of collaborative, adaptive processes with highly flexible designs, and adaptive capacity and learning in implementation.

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c) What is the role of technical assistance in sustainable and equitable water governance in Nepal?

Finally, I considered the practical role of technical assistance in achieving outcomes for sustainable and equitable water governance and rural development in Nepal, again taking examples from the cases of the two Finnish-funded water projects, RVWRMP and RWSSP-WN (as well as the earlier Finnish-funded water activities in Nepal – the so-called Lumbini project). Is there a benefit to having the TA involved in implementation on the ground?

Operationalising the right to water and sanitation and gender equality via appropriate technology in rural Nepal

White, P., Rautanen, S-L., Nepal, P. 2017. 'Operationalising the right to water and sanitation and gender equality via appropriate technology in rural Nepal' in Mariateresa Garrido V. (ed) *Human Rights and Technology. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. UPEACE Press, Costa Rica. p. 217-239

This chapter from a book on human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals, looked at whether a tap, a squat toilet, or an improved cooking stove – all simple rural technologies – can make a contribution to achieving human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? It asked what 'soft' elements, beyond the technology, that are needed?

This chapter explores how, the principles of human rights based approach (HRBA), gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) are mainstreamed and operationalized through the two Finnish-funded bilateral rural water projects in Nepal. The technologies include water supply systems; renewable energy, including micro-hydropower schemes, improved cooking stoves, improved water mills and hydraulic ram pumps, as well as water seal toilets.

As above, the chapter noted the difficulties for local duty bearers to ensure the right to water and sanitation (Meier et al, 2014; Satterthwaite, 2014; Marks, 2014). The UN declared Right to Water and Sanitation (2010) has been very well accepted by international institutions, national governments and NGOs, but at the local level, among local utilities or local government, it is difficult to translate the principles into practice. In addition, the political nature of the SDGs (and the earlier MDGs), meant that they were debated for many years and purposefully written as political projects and not legally binding international agreements. This case study focused on the results achieved and critical lessons learned regarding gender equality and empowerment (SDG 5) and access to water and sanitation (SDG 6), as well as the Right to Water and Sanitation.

The article's research question is: how can the principles be operationalized in practice, taking the protection of human rights and the use of technology within the framework of the 2030 Agenda as the point of entry with a particular focus on gender equality, water and sanitation? This case study shows how the projects have conceptualized the approach, how it is translated into action, what has been achieved, what have been the challenges, and which could be the relevant global learnings from this local experience.

The chapter finds that simply providing technology is not enough. It is vital that the technology is applied within a strong planning and implementation framework, integrated in local government and communities, but supported with skilful facilitation.

Water security and social inclusion: Local governance within the newly established rural municipalities in Nepal

ARTICLE VII - White, P. and Haapala, J. 2018. 'Water security and social inclusion: Local governance within the newly established rural municipalities in Nepal'. *New Angle: Nepal journal of social science and public policy. Vol.5, Issue 1.* This article was peer-reviewed and first published in the New Angle Special Issue on 'Water security and inclusive water governance in the Himalayas'.

Finally, I considered the recent context of the decentralisation and federalisation process in Nepal. Rural Municipalities (RMs) were established in mid-2017 as new, democratic, local tiers of governance. The previous elections were in 1998, and normal democratic governance was suspended during the following years of civil war and constitutional debate. One of the new responsibilities or the municipalities, as outlined by the new Constitution, is to ensure equitable access to water for all their citizens. This means they must tackle decreasing water availability, increasing demands for domestic, agricultural and commercial uses, impacts of climate change, and the challenges of ensuring inclusive and participatory decision-making (Biggs et al, 2013). At the same time, they are finding their role and ways of operating after years of strong central control. The study analyses the current status of newly established RMs in remote areas of Sudur Paschim (Far West) and Karnali Provinces in terms of their institutional capacity to implement inclusive water governance and water security in collaboration with a donor-funded project, in this case RVWRMP.

The article is an early view of this collaboration, one of the first to be written from the experiences so far. It is based on interviews with some RM elected officials and staff, a workshop and interviews with project staff, as well as on project data. The article used the OECD Principles on Water Governance (OECD 2011; 2015) as a framework to analyse coordination themes of governance, through the topics of administration, information, policies, capacity, funding, objectives, and accountability. We used this to frame particularly the water security and social inclusion themes in the RMs.

The opportunities identified include the potential for improving information and more accountable policy formulation at a closer level to the community, by leaders who are more representative and accountable to their citizens. On the other hand, there is a risk that policy formulation and accountability of governance could go astray. The risk remains of the emergence of elite-driven business-as-usual approaches with enduring inequalities in control over water (Leder et. al, 2017, Rusca and Schwartz, 2014; Aasland and Haug, 2008). The RMs are currently struggling with weaknesses in staffing, infrastructure and institutions. In such a weak institutional environment, external technical assistance can play important facilitation and implementation support roles. We conclude that this is a key moment to support the fledgling rural municipalities, and demonstrate ways

to build their capacities to secure safe water for all. It is early days yet to analyse the collaboration. It will be important to evaluate this at a later stage.

Mustalahti et al (2019), in a study of community-based forestry management, argued that "in order to support responsive and collaborative governance instead of responsibilization, three aspects need to be recognized: 1) capabilities, 2) agency, 3) level of structures, and their interrelationships as analytical concepts" (p. 10). They argue that without these factors, donors are simply washing their hands of the responsibility and allowing powerful local actors to dominate. While agreeing with this in many situations, I would argue that in the two case study projects, the difference has been that with hands-on support from TA and the project structures and guidelines, User Committees (UCs) have had adequate structures, agency and capabilities. This hasn't been perfect, but it was the best solution possible under the years without democratically elected local governments. Now, by working closely with the new municipalities, water governance will hopefully improve. One aspect is the piloting of a Water Board concept at municipal level during 2019, whereby operation and maintenance can been institutionalised and financed by the municipality, and some pressure removed from the UCs, while still allowing them to exercise agency. The results of this pilot experience will be evaluated and will be valuable throughout Nepal.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF THE PROS AND CONS OF TA

I use some of the criticisms of TA from Action Aid (2005 and 2006), and earlier discussed criticisms to frame my findings regarding the role of TA, as follows:

Advisers have often suitable lacked skills or expertise, particularly when needing to translate policy to practice

Historically, this was very common. For instance, in the past (particularly in the 1970s and 1980s), Finnish TA was often sent to developing countries straight from university, without work experience. They had the latest technical skills, but limited experience in putting them into practice, particularly in another setting. While this was less problematic for JPOs or volunteers (who have more leeway for learning on-the-job), consultants were expected to transfer these technologies directly. In addition, earlier TA projects tended to promote western technologies or systems, without adequate identification of needs (eg. Forss et al, 1988; Scheba and Mustalahti, 2015; White, 2015; Koch and Weingart, 2017). It is also true that coming from a western country gives an immediate advantage of assumed expertise (although at times the reverse is true in the United Nations, from personal experience).

However, times have changed. While people working in development often started out as volunteers or Junior Experts and then continued to 'expert'

posts, the career path is now more difficult (Articles I and II; Eyben, 2012 and 2014). In recent years the TA requirements are more demanding (at least for consultants, but also for NGO staff). TA for any modality usually need at least a Master's degree, and good language skills in English and other major languages, as well as developing country experience. However, current tendering practices do not necessarily identify the best TA for a job. The focus tends to be on the qualifications and the length of the CV, rather than the harder to evaluate cultural-cognitive skills, and the ability to translate policies to practice. Even when experienced persons are well-known, or are vetted carefully for a post, in practice problems can arise. The two case projects in Nepal have had experiences of local and international TA who didn't mesh well with the role. In these cases, the while the individual human factor was a poor match, the long term relationships of the others in the project (the institution) were able to overcome the difficulties. I agree with the description of Woolcock (2007) that development students and workers need the skills of detectives, translators and diplomats.

Long term TA involvement at grassroots level tends to limit the risk of inappropriate solutions, as there is time to work with local TA and stakeholders and identify solutions with local fit (Merry, 2016; Byskov, 2017; White and Haapala, 2019, and Haapala and White, 2018). A risk of the changing modalities is that if there is TA involved, it may be more often for short term inputs. This gives less time to get to know the local needs and become translators or bricoleurs.

Mosse (2005) argued that "in order to 'work' policy models and programme designs have to be transformed in practice. They have to be translated into the different logic of the intentions, goals and ambitions of the many people and institutions they bring together." (Mosse, 2005, p.232). In other words the policy is not pointless, but provides a framework. On this framework, if there is sufficient trust and flexibility, the TA can translate the project document and the policies and guidelines of the clients into something that will function at local level. In a system exhibiting principal-agent relationships, with a lack of trust, the principal may not allow this transformation, and the project will not succeed. In NGO activities, the policy framework is generally looser and projects are designed jointly by Finnish and local NGOs, prior to submitting the plan to the financier. This greater trust is differs from the more tightly controlled system sometimes applied in bilateral projects.

Mosse (2005) argued that that in his case study project, there was a gap between reality and the way it was represented to the client and public. Yanguas (2018) found the same, with the result being a focus on outputs that are measurable, in order to assist the narrative. The sheer detail that would be required in order to transmit all the local nuances of a complex situation is too much for normal reporting processes in the case study projects in Nepal. No-one would read it. Hence, the narrative is simplified to the results framework

for regular reporting, and other information is produced on request, or for special Briefs, etc.

I have seen this gap between reality and narrative occur when TA are struggling with a problematic project, perhaps not allowed to transform it to a more workable concept in practice for many reasons – both in the projects I have worked with over the years, as well as those I have evaluated. This can lead to a tendency to blur the truth (exaggerating the successes and downplaying the problems). If the true problems could be recognised by all stakeholders and the design could be changed (such as via DDD methods) there would be no need for this. However, in the messy environments where this work takes place, this is not easy, putting TA in a difficult position.

Consultant TA are greedy, arrogant, culturally out of place and offering overly technical solutions

This is the area where TA working as consultants have received the most criticism. Typically, many of the critiques have been on international TA working in large projects from the past (Hancock, 1989; Spivak, 1988; Berg, 1993; Crewe and Harrison, 1998; Kapoor, 2004).

International TA are paid well, particularly in comparison to national TA or national government staff. As noted above, this is partly a reflection of their temporary employment situation, as well as the costs of their home country. As discussed, they face long hours far from home, and risk disrupted family lives, uncertain contracts and potential danger. Naturally this is true in many settings for the national TA.

At times, both national and international TA can bring culturally insensitive attitudes. At least one of my respondents held the attitude that he was the expert and he passed his technical expertise down to the local counterparts, with little understanding (or even interest) of the local setting. I have known consultants who were demanding or arrogant, and not interested to adjust their approaches for different settings. I have also seen these behaviours and attitudes among national government, multilateral organisation or embassy staff. Perhaps there is a higher risk of demanding behaviour from consultants or donor staff, as they typically have more power than NGO or volunteer staff (Devereux, 2010).

I disagree with the consistently negative stereotype portrayed the literature, considering that as with any other profession, there are good and bad examples of TA. There may also be a peculiarity in this sense from my dataset. Finns lack a colonial history and the baggage of coming from a large country with imperialist designs. I consider that Finnish personal characteristics reflect this, and they have little reputation in developing countries for arrogant behaviour (at least from my personal experience and the comments of respondents, though this is not something that is possible to prove scientifically). For this reason it is possible that my findings may limit their generalisation to other national groups.

My data does not demonstrate a clear binary of altruistic NGO staff and greedy consultants. As noted earlier, and in Article I, Stirrat argued that the categories he described as 'mercenaries' (TA working for donors or consulting companies) and 'missionaries' (NGO staff) were converging (Stirrat, 2008), with their professional backgrounds, motivations and roles becoming similar. If anything this tendency has even increased over recent years, with the professionalisation of the NGO sector, the shrinking of the consulting sector, and frequent cross-overs of persons between these roles (Articles I and III). At the same time the emergence of a Finnish development habitus is visible across the spectrum. Fechter (2017) also described this shared motivation – a wish to 'do good', even described as a vocation – as being common across different roles. Most of my respondents (from all backgrounds, though predominantly Finnish and Nepalese) expressed a wish to 'do good' as well as many other motivations (Articles I, II, IV and V). In Article V, for instance, we considered how the motivations and individual relationships of the local staff influence their ability to successfully support bricolage at local level. It also cannot be assumed that government staff from national level will necessarily have a perfect understanding of the local setting in any country, especially when they may be of different caste, ethnicity or sex to the participating community members. It is important that the best TA (both international and local) are fielded, in particular those with suitable inter-personal characteristics (Koch and Weingart, 2017; White, accepted for publication, 2019). The cultural–cognitive element and habitus of the project staff is important for a good local fit (Woolcock, 2007).

Some projects remain quite technical. In these cases, it is possible that local counterparts are mainly interested in the technical solution (for instance in the institutional cooperation projects, for example Mayer, 2017), yet they may not be sustainable in that case. In most cases some degree of 'indigenous' or social knowledge is also needed (Collins and Evans, 2002; Byskov, 2017), particularly if there is a need to facilitate bricolage and find a good fit for policies and practices (Articles IV and V).

Some governments have not been strategic in their use of technical assistance, as many have been donor-driven. Donors still play a key role in the identification of needs, project design, terms of reference design, procurement, reporting and monitoring and evaluation

Donors do play a strong role in project design and implementation, though there are usually long negotiations regarding needs and objectives. Berg (1993) and many others have argued that the role of donor-led TA is problematic. However, an ideal method of aid provision hasn't been identified. Recipient governments are not obliged to accept aid – it is up to them to decide what their needs are. This can be seen clearly in recent months in Nepal, where the government is arguing vociferously for its own point of view in bilateral negotiations. In recent years, many recipient governments have become very

strict regarding how much TA they will accept – arguing that they want funds for implementation, not TA. This is part of the reason for a continuing decrease in TA. However, at times, these demands have not reflected a realistic means to carry out the work planned in the project – but are instead a simple percentage plucked from the air for political reasons. In the case of high value loans, there is more incentive for the recipient country to accept conditions set by the donor, including TA, in order to access funds for implementation, particularly for infrastructure development.

Heavy use of expatriate consultants can foster a 'dependency culture' and lead recipient governments to assume that the donor will always be there

I was surprised in my first experiences in development, working in Nicaragua, on the dependency mind set of my colleagues. In particular, dependency is evident in many countries where there is a long history of colonial and post-colonial donor involvement (Koch and Weingart, 2017). This is counterproductive for sustainable development. Moyo (2009) famously argued that development aid was fostering dependency, corruption and weak governance in Africa, and wasn't helping – however her focus was not on TA, but on the financial transfers. Berg (1993) recommended the use of short-term advisors. However, in my experience this doesn't allow time for sufficient relationship building and an opportunity for joint work, unless it takes place over the long term – instead there is a tendency for short term advisors to be the 'experts' and talk down to the local counterparts.

In practice, most countries are expressing less interest in receiving grants and loans (including TA) if it comes with too many constraints. This is particularly true if new donors, such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), are offering loans without strings. It has been noted that most BRICS nations' aid modalities resemble aid practices of the DAC donors a couple of decades ago - for instance, the majority of their aid is tied. The grant share is usually much smaller than loans, and the export support element is significant (particularly in the cases of China and India). The BRICS claim to apply a principle of non-interference (for instance, with regard to human rights or environment), however researchers consider that, as with traditional donors, they are largely motivated by their geopolitical and commercial self-interests (Asmus et al, 2017). China has emphasised infrastructure construction, using its own companies, workers and materials, with no particular aim of capacity building (Herbert, 2012). This is closer to the concept of Finnish development cooperation in the 1970s and 80s.

In countries and projects where there are greater financial contributions from local stakeholders, there is less risk of donor control and local dependency. This is seen in the case study projects in Nepal, where a large proportion of the implementation budget comes from national and local government, and beneficiaries.

TA may have incentives not to build capacities and pass on knowledge to their counterparts, as this would reduce their future employability

It can be argued that TA have a perverse incentive to not do themselves out of a job (Hancock, 1989; Gibson et al, 2005). In practice, most of the TA I studied are doing their best to work with local counterparts and build their capacities, as it is impossible to do their job without this. It is difficult also to define suitable indicators to measure improvements in capacities. It should also be recognised that some counterparts have incentives not to share all knowledge with the international TA. This is partly as a means for the counterpart to maintain some brokerage power in what is a somewhat unequal relationship.

TA are often under pressure from donors and governments to 'get the job done' and meet donor demands, rather than focus on capacity building or more sustainable development

TA does have to respond to project targets, the norms and guidelines, and to the Supervisory Board members – both donor and recipient governments. There is a constant dilemma as to whose opinion counts. Both sides have different (and sometimes opposing) agendas. Large donors and financing institutions have considerably more power than smaller ones such as Finland. There is no uniform opinion or values on the recipient side – preferences of national level stakeholders are likely to be quite different from a local NGO, or a local government official in a remote area, or women in a user committee. The same argument can be made regarding many issues. For instance, how much of the budget should be spent on monitoring versus implementation?

A focus on technical transfer rather than social fit, tends to weaken sustainability. One method to change this would be to move towards giving more power to the local stakeholders (for instance, via budget support), however this would be problematic for the donor (in this case, the MFA) as it would lead to less accountability regarding expenditure (Mayer, 2017). Results Based Management and Value for Money approaches have been extensively applied in recent years, to the detriment of qualitative aspects of the work of TA. TA spends a lot of time reporting and meeting targets (often for things that are easily measurable, rather than more nebulous issues of finding better ways to work), or as a 'doer', rather than building capacity and working politically (Gibson et al, 2009; Koch and Weingart, 2017; Yanguas, 2018; Honig; 2018). On the other hand, NGO work is often more focused on planning and capacity building but with limited ability to implement at large scale. The modality of the case study projects, having staff based at local level and managing funds jointly with local government, appear to be a successful method to meet the ends of functionality, capacity building and ownership, alongside accountability (discussed in Article IV). The test of long term sustainability remains to be seen after the project has ended (White et al, 2015). However, this does not imply that this would function well in all settings or sectors.

I would argue that TA within bilateral projects also has a gate-keeper role. In order to continue to justify spending on aid to its taxpayers, donor governments usually require information as to how it was spent. TA plays a role within the principal-agent chain, or the octangle of cooperation, facilitating the translation of policy to practice but also controlling implementation, including expenditure.

Capacity building initiatives have been undermined by a lack of policy coherence, such as IMF limits on public service salaries or national budget constraints leading to brain drain from the public service and insufficient staff to train, or emigration of trained staff to Western countries

Over the years there have been many attempts to resolve this problem, all having their pros and cons. The line ministry or local government staff are very often underpaid, or posts are left vacant in remote areas. In Nepal, the latter case is particularly severe, as most government staff prefer to work in less remote areas. Many of the municipalities where the case study projects operate have such severe gaps in their staffing, including accountants, that as of December 2019, municipal staff have not been paid for months. To resolve this, the TA projects can either top up local salaries, or gap fill – neither situation being sustainable. In all countries, trained staff often move to the private sector or emigrate (Riddell, 2007). It is impossible for TA to stop this, nor is it the business of donors to do so.

Weak donor co-ordination means TA may give contradictory advice, or not be aligned with government policy

This is always a risk, however it assumes that TA is the only stakeholder. While I argue that TA play a key role as translators of policy to practice, there are many other actors in the 'octangle' of development cooperation, providing advice and controlling activities. In the Finnish case study projects in Nepal, all activities are aligned with Nepalese government policy, and the local governments make the decisions regarding the flow of funds for implementation. While in earlier phases, the expenditure was jointly managed with TA, now the municipalities control the bank accounts, while the TA and the local NGO working as service providers are in an advisory role. Typically, international NGOs and private sector actors work independently from local government. This does make it difficult to coordinate work and avoid duplication.

TA is not sustainable

A common argument is that due to its transitory nature, TA is not sustainable. This has historically often been true in many cases, and the whole development enterprise faces this problem (for instance, it can also be said of budget

support or other financial support, or even for infrastructure development). TA can play a temporary substitution role – for instance, gap filling in teaching or medical roles. Project aid is not suitable to all situations, just as NGOs are not suitable in others. The traditionally very technical TA that was 'parachuted in' via the projects of the 1980s had less chance of sustainability as it was not socially a good fit. However, if TA is focused on capacity building and development of good approaches, it has some opportunity to be sustainable (Rautanen, 2016). TA provided in the institutional cooperation instrument projects of the MFA, is focused on technical capacity building, but the short timelines and limited face-to-face opportunities limit the sustainability to some extent (Mayer, 2017). An example of improved technical sustainability is outlined in White et al (2015) – RVWRMP's Step-by-Step approach, community involvement, water safety plan, post-construction phase and hands on support from technical staff led to improved functionality compared with the schemes implemented by the government. Another was offered in Rautanen and White (2018), where the early capacity building and TA support, combined with the Step-by-Step approach, has supported sustainable functionality of a water provider. Article VII has followed the role of RVWRMP's TA in capacity building and facilitating bricolage in the new rural municipalities. It showed some promising steps but follow-up is needed in time to assess the success and sustainability of the work of the TA. Probably the success of sustainability will depend on the type of the intervention (as noted elsewhere, water is 'easier' than forestry). While the TA is helping to build local commitment and capacities, the length of the intervention, and the likely availability of future funds once aid ends will also be important for determining the sustainability.

TA has a very high cost, especially international TA

Undoubtedly, TA working in bilateral or multilateral projects or programmes, and especially international TA, is expensive (though there are many reasons for this, discussed elsewhere in this thesis). In the heyday of Finnish bilateral projects, TA teams were large and very expensive (Forss et al, 1988). Consulting companies made good profits (perhaps even excessively good). However, evidence discussed in Article III shows that the margins are now so low as to be financially non-viable. On the other hand, these costs are visible, unlike the invisible costs associated with direct budget support and other modalities. This lack of visibility refers both to the potential losses due to corruption, but also to the impossibility of following how the money is spent under these modalities, due to fungibility and complicated fund flows. I argue that despite the cost, some element of TA is still valuable.

TA is often tied, either officially or unofficially

Finnish development cooperation is officially untied (other than via research funding, institutional cooperation and the private sector support instruments). Tenders are all open, and mainly run in English language. This makes Finland compliant with EU legislation preventing tying. However, it is true that Finnish consulting companies and individuals provide most of the Finnish-funded TA. For some posts, the MFA Finland prefers to have a Finnish advisor (for instance in the case of the Junior Experts, which are meant as a role to train the future Finnish development cadre). In addition, MFA staff usually like to have Finnish-based consulting companies, who can discuss project and development issues with them in person. However, at least at tendering stage, it is virtually impossible to require this, other than via methods such as asking for Finnish language expertise.

There is an interesting dilemma for Finnish TA. Most Finns these days are more interested in short term assignments or visits to other countries, as this allows them to 'have a life'. In particular it is difficult to balance relationships with family and friends from a distance, and few posts are suitable for children. Female JPOs have often preferred not to be retained within posts in the UN after their JPO assignment, as they wanted to return to Finland to enjoy the more balanced work-life environment, including longer maternity leave (White et al, 2011). This means that although the majority of Finnish JPOs are women, they are less likely to continue in the UN system. Finnish NGO staff (with some exceptions) are mainly based in Finland, rather than in developing countries, and make only short term visits. People with strong experience and good reputations in the sought-after fields for bilateral projects are often difficult to find for long term posts, particularly in remote areas. The older cadre who began working in development in the 1980s and '90s are reaching retirement. Younger persons either have insufficient project experience to take up team leader roles, or they don't want to leave behind young families. This is a dilemma for the MFA. While they might wish to have Finnish expertise, it is sometimes very difficult to get.

6 CONCULSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

I have asked: What is the role, motivations and contribution of individuals, and the organisations that employ them, in development cooperation? My contention is that the development 'octangle' (and development interventions specifically) depends on human agency and capabilities in the form of both individuals and organisations – rather than only the transfer of money or technology. This includes the attitudes and motivations of the beneficiaries themselves, the local governments, donor government staff, NGOs and researchers, and the persons involved in the provision of technical assistance. All these groups have the chance to contribute to, or to impede development. These articles drill down particularly to the role of the latter group of TA.

'Development' itself is complex to define, including concepts of environmentally, economically, socially and institutionally sustainable development. While early development activities were more focused on modernisation and technical transfer, I have considered it to include issues of basic needs, capabilities and human rights.

My research was grouped into three main questions.

I first considered the roles and motivations of individuals and the consulting companies working in development cooperation. I have personally worked in a broad range of roles in development and as an academic practitioner. I was drawn to study what I considered was the invisible role of individual actors in development. Individuals in donor and recipient governments make policies and strategies, and plan modalities for aid delivery. They may get a start in development cooperation as volunteers or Junior Experts/Junior Professional Officers. Some continue to work with NGOs, either in donor countries (in this case, Finland) or in developing countries. Others work for consulting companies, on the business side of development; or as consultants working with local communities or governments to implement projects. Some who study development go on to research and teaching in universities. Yet there are many similarities between these groups.

The persons working in development need to operate within the norms and regulations of the donor and recipient governments, and the local cultures and realities of the countries, local governments and communities they work with. The individuals both influence the group they work with, and in turn are influenced by the group habitus.

Many researchers have criticised TA. Much of this appears to be based on ethical questions of making money from work for poverty reduction, and question of power. My research noted that the differences between the people

working in different modalities of TA are diminishing and the similarities increasing. I agree with Fechter, Gibson et al, Eyben and others that more attention should be given to motivations and behaviours of the individuals working at all levels of the development octangle.

This research began with a study of the motivations and expectations of Finnish individuals working in a broad selection of development roles. I found that while the reasons for entering the field varied, a shared development habitus emerged as a result of their experiences. There also appeared to be a difference in motivations expressed by the earlier and recent entries to the market. I then considered the entry points to work in development, in particular via development studies in Finnish universities. I concluded that students of development need more than critical theory, but also broader competencies for development practice.

One issue seen in this research and in discussion in Finnish development circles is the lack of opportunities for young Finns to work in development. There are both decreased entry points (with a decrease in multilateral JPO and bilateral Junior Expert posts), and limited opportunities to progress to continuing multilateral or bilateral roles. This is having long term impacts on the availability of Finnish TA and staff for the MFA and embassies.

The third article looked at the role of companies working in development cooperation in Finland. It noted the constraints exerted on the companies by the principal (the MFA), despite common values and ends. It also raised the dilemma of whether it is possible to 'do good' while making money. This is a question that is more recently being tackled by commercial companies under the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility, but it those cases, 'doing good' is a side issue to their main work, and to some extent a marketing tool. For development consulting companies, it is their main purpose, and making a profit in a market economy is a requirement for survival, rather than their main purpose. I concluded that under the existing system of development cooperation, if the donors (in this case, the MFA Finland specifically) wish to have institutional memory, to assert some policy guidance and have contact with work on the ground in developing countries (as discussed in Articles III and IV), consulting companies and the experts they employ play an important role.

The focus then moved to the case study of water resources management projects in Nepal, where I considered the roles of both international and local technical advisors, working with the communities and with donors and national government. I asked: What contribution can (or should?) these individuals and companies make to translating norms, regulatory frameworks and values into practice in complex operating environments? I argue that there is a critical role for individual agency within complex systems, given the power of the individual to alter the function of the wider system or project.

A key institutional theory - principal-agent theory - can be seen in action there, as well as the actions of translation and bricolage - involving the interactions between individual agency and institutions. The former, assumes

a rational top-down and bottom-up cycle of policy and practices, driven by self-interest. Translation involves taking policy and trying to find a suitable fit. Bricolage raises the point that there are multiple, sometimes conflicting, influences on individuals within communities of different kinds. With bricolage, individuals and institutions sometimes adapt formal and non-formal processes. All these processes have benefits and risks.

The bilateral projects that I have studied themselves play a role in forming a culture and habitus amongst the staff, and incoming TA tend to adopt these values (though also their own values interact with that of the project). In turn, along with the project activities and funds, the values of the TA are also influencing the community level participants and institutions, and vice versa, the experiences at field level influence the TA. Constant adjustments take place in these interactions. This can be seen in most workplaces, but perhaps it is more extreme in the remote locations where the case studies operate. It was also clear when interviewing respondents for the earlier articles from the MFA and from NGOs, and also in interviews with JPOs, that they have absorbed the values of their employing organisation. In these cases, the individuals probably have less opportunity to influence the organisation (particularly in the case of those working with UN organisations).

In the case of the TA in Article IV, the focus was on their key role in translating the concepts of gender equality, social inclusion and human rights to fit the local cultural setting in practice (including aspects of principal-agent theory). I favour the concept of translation, which requires the conscious choice of the translator, to find the best fit (Freeman, 2009). The evaluation of cross-cutting issues by the MFA (2008) found that long-term involvement and support to a sector enhances the consideration and mainstreaming of crosscutting issues. Article IV also found that in comparison to the no-project or limited TA involvement scenarios, long term TA involvement supported the ability of disenfranchised members of communities to claim their rights, providing the TA were committed to this. For the field workers (in Article V), the focus was on the interactions with the local community when ensuring access to rural water supply and sanitation. In both cases the motivations and the long-term, 'on the ground' expertise of the individuals was critical to their ability to solve problems and find a good local fit for policies. Respondents told of TA and local staff who had either facilitated or blocked this process. It was clear that the individuals in both groups were playing dual roles, as agents of governance and policy promotion, top-down; and as problem solvers, adapting ideas and practices at local level and feeding them back up to national government and the donor. In other words, they were both translators and bricoleurs. Individuals were important in this process, in formal and informal interactions, rather than only the organisations or policies. But they were also influenced by the communities that they work in, and the project ethos and guidelines. For instance, in RVWRMP, the project ethos, and the fact that staff spend so much time in each other's company, away from their families, is such that the staff refer to the 'RV family'.

Mosse and others have argued that policy cannot be directly translated. In general, I agree that policies written in Finland or developing country capitals can't be directly put into practice in the field, however the degree of translation required is quite location and sector-specific. In the case study projects in Nepal, policy on issues such as rural water supply and sanitation have a good fit locally, and as such behaviour change and ownership have not been very problematic (though there has been some degree of bricolage in some user committees). Unlike in Mosse's case study in a British aid project in India (Mosse, 2005), there is not a link to sales of modern technology or inputs, such as seeds. I do not see a commercial benefit for Finland influencing the policy processes – the objectives in Nepal appear more developmentalist. However, in issues such as gender equality (particularly in taboo subjects such as menstruation) and social inclusion, finding a good local fit is more problematic (Articles IV and V, Haapala and White, 2015). The Human Right to Water and Sanitation (2010) has been agreed to at international and national level, yet local government duty bearers are not even aware of its existence (Articles IV and VI). These issues are important in Finnish culture and as Nussbaum (2003) argues, they are too important to ignore.

Simply handing over the money or technology does not ensure it will be used as anticipated. In addition, a direct handover of Finnish technology or systems may not be functional (or even appropriate) without translation to the local setting and capacities (see for instance, forest inventory in Tanzania, as discussed by Scheba and Mustalahti, 2015; or meteorological cooperation, Mayer, 2017).

In the case of bilateral projects, the financiers (and in some cases, recipient government) contract TA via companies to deliver a combination of money and technology, with an assumed overlay of values. It is often assumed that carefully crafted policies from donor HQ will be implemented worldwide, regardless of the cultural setting. There is an assumed flow from rational aid policies, to aid practice, to aid consequences and impacts, yet none of these steps are certain and uncontested (Sharma and Koponen, 2004). Even though aid practice has moved from simple logical frameworks to more complex theories of change, there is still an assumption that things will flow smoothly. My experience has shown that the way that the project document is translated to local needs in practice, in interactions between TA and local actors, as well as the adaptations that take place in the local community via bricolage, will define whether it achieves its expected development outcomes.

In addition, Mosse (2005), Gibson et al (2005), Yanguas (2018) noted that it is difficult to speak publically in a balanced way about the successes and failures of development. This is partly self-interest, but also reflects the complexity of the issues. For instance, after so many years of working in Nepal, some people might expect that the menstrual taboos had been 'sorted'. The reality of behaviour change is slow and incremental. There are no simple explanations for the wicked problems faced, though the media and the public expect perfection and are ready to maul anyone who falls short. This makes

most working in development anxious about criticism, and encourages TA to avoid discussion of nuanced issues.

The final two articles responded to the question: What is the role of technical assistance in achieving sustainable and equitable water governance in Nepal? In other words, what is the result of these attempts to translate values to practice? In the book chapter this idea was discussed (Article VI). The technologies that the projects support are important for local development, facilitating access to clean water and renewable energy, and improving local health outcomes. The technologies are not, on their own, able to contribute to the SDGs and human rights agreements without strong facilitation support at local level by the TA. Likewise, simply applying the donor or Nepali policies of gender equality or human rights directly, without adaptation to a real world GESI action plan would not gain traction. They need to be transformed via interpretative communities (as described by Mosse, 2005). This generally means, the TA and local NGO staff of the projects, working together with local government and communities to find a good fit. I do not consider this to be problematic, providing there is flexibility. This is not hidden from the respective governments, but instead the results are fed back upwards. What would be problematic, and would constitute a true disjuncture between policy and practice, would be if the alterations to plans and the results were concealed (as claimed by Mosse, 2005).

Giving a focus to the outcomes and potential sustainability of the technical assistance, I also studied the role of the projects in water governance and social inclusion with the newly established rural municipalities in rural Nepal (Article VII). This was a fresh experience from one of the few large-scale projects supporting the municipalities, learning from the weaknesses as well as strengths. It concluded that if TA can help to build capacities and systems within the new institutions, there is a chance to support sustainable local development and achievement of rights. Naturally there is a risk that without the TA, the progress will eventually slow. But the without-TA case (as shown in Article IV) meant that little information trickled down to local government and communities, nor was there much capacity building, virtually ensuring business-as-usual. The case study showed that by working with the local stakeholders, facilitating involvement of disadvantaged groups, and giving them practice in contracting, implementing and managing their own infrastructure, at least there is a chance to make a change for the better.

I focused in the case studies on water governance and the individuals involved, specifically on the Finland-Nepal projects. I recognise that the findings may have been different in a different country or sector (and certainly I have seen different, more fraught relationships in some other countries and sectors). It is likely that my thesis would have been different without the experiences from Nepal. Some of my work experiences from other countries have given less positive views of the modality of technical development cooperation. Finland and Nepal both lack a colonial history, which would otherwise be likely to influence the relationship. In countries with a colonial

past (even if Finland was not involved) and an environment of donor dependency, the relationship with international TA and companies is often more fraught. One Finnish informant commented that in his opinion, the relationship between Finland and Nepal regarding the water projects is genuinely 'development cooperation'. That is not to say that power imbalances and disagreements don't exist, but both governments are contributing significant funds and energy to the case study projects, and there is a genuine sense of shared management. Development cooperation in the water sector has continued for 30 years, resulting in considerable institutional memory. Decisions have been reached by a process of negotiations between the two governments, and by the local and international TA learning from implementation experiences and adapting. These have included, for instance, the constant tweaking of the Step-by-Step guidelines to fit with new conditions, changes in procurement steps, or moving smoothly to working directly with the newly established local governments. It is remarkable that in RWSSP-WN Phase II, the combined budgetary contribution to implementation of the national and local governments and users in Nepal was greater than that of Finland[15]. This would appear to be an indicator of the satisfaction of both governments with the results achieved by the larger than normal TA and local staff teams, which allowed targets to be reached.

The nature of water as a subject for development cooperation has emerged to be important. My earlier research on forestry (White and Mustalahti, 2005; Mustalahti and White, 2007), showed that sector-wide approaches were less effective when used for forest sector cooperation than for health or education. I speculate that the reason is partly because the latter are public goods, more accepted as priorities for development. In addition, there are generally many varied actors involved in the forestry sector. While I made this comparison in regard to sectoral programmes, I think that this finding could be extrapolated to projects as well. As with exploitation of other resources, there is more money to be made from forestry (with even a potential link to the Finnish private sector), than from basic needs such as water (though in the foreseeable future, due to climate change pressures, water may indeed become more significantly monetised, threatening the approach to water as a human right). In the discussions of TA in community/participatory forestry, cited elsewhere in this synthesis (Scheba and Mustalahti, 2015; Nightingale, 2005; Green and Lund, 2015; Karambiri, 2019), it also seems clear that there is a risk that professional knowledge over-powers traditional knowledge and the contextual setting, with the authors arguing that specifications have become too technical. Who takes over, who makes the decisions? Traditionally, water was collected in Nepal from springs or streams, requiring only traditional knowledge and hard labour for transport, usually by women. When designing a piped water system, while the role of community is important, there is a clear need for engineering knowledge. Otherwise the system may not function at all.

[15] Though if the TA costs are included, the Finnish contribution is 54% in total.

As Green and Lund (2015) argue, the emphasis on technical and administrative aspects in rural water supply favours the domain of literate and numerate community members, with the risk of elite capture, as in the forestry examples. Yet the benefits of clean, safe and accessible water seem to outweigh the risks in the eyes of communities.

Water can suffer from common-pool resources problems leading to over-use, as with community forestry or grazing lands. In the case study areas there were conflicts over water at times. However, water is a well-accepted basic need, and now, according to the UN and some countries, a right (what is more complicated is to ensure ownership and future maintenance). The rural water sector projects aim to enhance the most basic human rights, such as basic nourishment and health, targets shared by all human beings. This has probably made the projects, and the technical staff they employ, easier to be accepted and more positively viewed.

In the spirit of constructivism, I stress that my findings are unique to a certain time, setting and culture. I cannot argue that TA will always work in every setting. Clearly that is not the case. Political changes in Nepal recently, and in many other countries, have led to gridlock regarding new Finnish-funded project development, due to disagreements between the MFA and recipient countries on modalities. So how can we increase the chances that technical cooperation is functional and sustainable? One message from this study is that long term TA (in whatever modality), working at local level is important, as it can build relationships and trust (Chambers, 2006, 2018; Booth and Unsworth, 2014). These case studies also demonstrated a level of flexibility and bricolage that support sustainability. I also found that technical expertise needs to be combined with supportive attitudes and motivations, in order to effectively translate relevant policy ideas down to community level and share the learning upwards (Articles VI and VII; White et al, 2015). Application of development ethics (Gasper 2012) must be combined with instrumentalities. A receptive local environment is important, with local institutions and community, and a genuine interest in the final result. Doing Development Differently (DDD) approaches have potential, though more research is needed to prove their effectiveness. However, DDD requires good policy translators and funding that is flexible and not strictly tied to fixed indicators and Value for Money.

It may be that this synthesis has reflected on the disappearing role of Finns in development, and the MFA may decide that it prefers to provide only financial aid in the future (or end aid altogether, the pros and cons of that action being outside of this study). However, I consider that would be a mistake, for many reasons. If we are to work towards achieving the SDGs globally, it is important that Finland remains actively involved and aware of development activities in other countries.

Many researchers have looked at development cooperation as a whole, and to some extent at the position of technical advisors, emphasising the top-down tendency. The novelty of this research was the focus on the people working in

development, and particularly their motivations and experiences working at grass roots level. In particular, I had a focus on Finns, and on Nepali TA working at field level in development projects – two groups that have rarely been the focus of research. I have considered the less acknowledged but critical role that individual motivations and capabilities and interpersonal relations can play, for all those working in the spectrum of technical cooperation. In addition, there has been little research worldwide on consulting companies working in development (to the extent that it was a struggle to find relevant literature for Article III). They are virtually invisible, both in official discourses and in development research. I was able to shine a light on the history and current practices of Finnish consulting companies (which also has some relevance for other European countries). This dissertation adds to the knowledge of how development cooperation works in practice.

I hope that my research can shine a light upon some of the positive elements of technical assistance, and not only provide a critical perspective. I have put forward new perspectives for discussion, based on practical field findings. It has also been informed by my own arc through the spectrum of development cooperation, my motivations and experiences, and those of others I have met along the way. A more nuanced understanding of the specific advantages and challenges of different types of technical cooperation and use of the complementarities, instead of assuming stereotypes, could have benefits for development work in general.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Development cooperation does not function simply as a financial transfer mechanism. Yet the role of the human factor when facilitating implementation is often ignored. Acknowledging the role of individuals in coordination with other stakeholders, in implementing policies and strategies, and adapting them to local realities, would be a critical step in development cooperation in general, and specifically, in water governance and human rights. This is important both for decision-makers and for researchers.

Recommendations fall into two areas as a consequence: recommendations for future research; and those for future activities and policies in development cooperation (although with some overlaps).

Further research could probe the relations between policy and practice and the role of translation, brokerage, and bricolage, as well as the potentially transformative role of the recipient government or community in such processes. Analysis of how much transformation happens in development interventions could provide valuable empirical evidence. For instance, tracking policies such as gender equality or specific human rights at each step

from donor to recipient government, to beneficiary, and the roles of those involved in translating them to practice, in a range of sectors and countries.

Given the rapidly changing governance environment in Nepal it would be beneficial to conduct further research on the role of technical assistance working with the evolving rural municipalities, in particular the impact on governance, water security and social inclusion. In particular, it would be valuable to assess whether the work of the project on GESI and HRBA topic and capacity building has led to lasting change, or whether there is a return to local business-as-usual once the projects and TA has gone. Have new behaviours, particularly on difficult issues such as rights, taboos and values, been sustained?

In addition, although 'Finnish Added Value' has seemingly fallen out of favour in Finnish development policy, the value of 'Finnishness' would also warrant some discussion and further research.

While this research has focused on Finnish and Nepali development workers (the latter, working in Nepal), I noted in the introduction that there is considerable scope to study the motivations and work of citizens of developing countries outside of their own country (for instance, those working for multilateral organisations). I expect that their motivations and expectations may vary considerably from the cohort that I have studied. Does this make a difference? Is their integration and the results of their work any different? This would make for a very interesting study.

Finally, in the face of the current COVID-19 pandemic, it would be very interesting to research the role of individual TA, donors and organisations, projects, civil society, and the Government of Nepal. Nepal has experienced several shocks over the last five years, including the earthquakes of 2015, the blockade by India, and now the COVID-19 lockdowns in order to protect the population from being overwhelmed by the disease. One of my case study projects has continued to work throughout, due to the commitment of the individual staff.

On the more practical side are the following recommendations.

It would be beneficial to expose development studies students to experienced TA of different types. Encouraging TA to return to study (either full time or alongside their practical work) and share their experiences might help development studies courses and the development industry work more closely together, rather than in silos. Combining academic courses and research, with more practical methodologies that students might use in future work is in the interests of the students. Reflective and experiential practice is a good way to maintain the interest of students and find a workable way between an excessively critical or vocational approach.

This dissertation has noted the changing environment for technical development cooperation, and the decreased role of Finnish consulting companies and technical assistance of all kinds. If the MFA Finland wishes to maintain a Finnish presence in its activities, serious discussion is needed to

establish how this can be achieved, within the constraints of tendering and EU competition rules. In particular, the MFA should seriously consider ways for young Finns to enter development cooperation, and to continue there. At present there is no clear path forward beyond a two year Junior assignment. Options might include mid-level assignments, with a preference for ex-Juniors. A stronger community could be built via exchanges between the MFA staff, development studies departments of universities, NGOs and consulting companies or projects.

The MFA may also want to consider options to overcome the structural problems of selection of TA of all types. There have been various attempts made over the past years, as discussed in chapter 3.4, however a perfect solution is not yet identified.

Trialling 'Doing Development Differently' approaches is another option. This would entail giving more flexibility in design and implementation, with short feedback loops and the opportunity to follow good leads. This does happen to some extent in the case study projects in Nepal. However, in many projects flexibility is more closely restricted by the project document. In addition, a more flexible approach would probably be dependent on more TA, either international or national. This TA is needed to monitor in depth, with knowledge of the local settings.

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